



Growing debate surrounds El Salvador nat'l elections

By SCOTT ADAMS-COOPER and JIM HENLE

Events are moving rapidly in El Salvador, and the situation is growing more polarized.

The Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) has offered a dramatic peace proposal that includes an offer, for the first time, to lay down their weapons and abide by the results of elections. The ruling Christian Democratic Party (PDC) is fading. Death-squad activity is on the rise, and the right-

Lynn Henderson/Socialist Action



Minneapolis Black community protests police violence

See page 3.

Chemical warfare, See page 9

wing ARENA party is poised to consolidate its grip over the country with a victory in the upcoming presidential election.

The FMLN peace proposal, described widely as a "total and fundamental change" on the part of the guerrilla leadership, has become the focus of the national political debate.

The guerrillas have reversed positions they held for a decade. For the first time, they agree to abide by election results—if elections are postponed until September—and no longer insist on the formation of an interim government in which they would share power. They no longer demand that their forces be integrated into a new national army, calling instead for changes in the structure and size of the Armed Forces.

As we go to press, Salvadoran President José Napoleón Duarte has agreed to postpone the elections and hold talks with the FMLN. Duarte called for holding the election on April 30, six weeks after the scheduled date, and proposed that a referendum be held on postponing the date if talks couldn't resolve the issue. Duarte is bound by the constitution to leave office June 1.

Duarte also called for an immediate ceasefire if the FMLN accepts the proposal. At press time, the FMLN had not responded to Duarte's proposal.

This development comes in the context of the FMLN's desire to find an opening with the new U.S. leadership. FMLN leaders have stated that their most recent military offensive is designed to gain an advantage in negotiations.

FMLN leader Comandante Balta explained: "We want to convince Washington that we are a serious player here, to make them sit at the bargaining table with us. The Bush administration certainly won't be willing to give us a role unless they're faced with the prospect of losing everything." (*San Francisco Examiner*, Feb. 12, 1989)

The FMLN's desire to negotiate a settlement on new and different terms comes on the heels of the message they've gotten from Moscow.

According to *U.S. News and World Report*, after their unprecedented tour around South America and Europe last year, "top rebel commanders Joaquin Villalobos and Leonel González . . . learned that Mikhail Gorbachev's Soviet Union is no longer interested in promoting distant revolutions and cannot even be counted on for economic aid if the FMLN wins the war." (Jan. 23, 1989)

The FMLN proposal

The FMLN worked hard to obstruct the last five national elections, which they called a

façade for oppressive U.S.-sponsored regimes. But in their proposal, initially offered on Jan. 23, the FMLN General Command offered to participate—if the March 19 presidential election is rescheduled and reorganized.

The guerrillas point to the March elections as a "detonator of a major political crisis that will lead to a definitive power vacuum," with the possibility of "genocide" from the right and "insurrection" from the left.

So, they call for a postponement of the elections until September (which would require a change in the Salvadoran constitution), and promise to respect the results if a number of conditions are met to ensure their free participation in the process.

Duarte's initial response was to characterize it as "a proposal for war . . . plagued by unconstitutionality." But pressure from the U.S. State Department and others resulted in a Feb. 20-21 meeting in Mexico between FMLN commanders and 13 Salvadoran political parties. The Armed Forces refused to participate, and Duarte was not directly represented.

The meeting saw a broadening of the FMLN's original proposal. A guerrilla statement on Feb. 21 indicated that compromise was possible, with their initial proposal characterized as "a first step toward seeking agreement and generating conditions that
(continued on page 8)

Democracy Gorbachev style



By CARL FINAMORE

Millions of Soviet voters will soon participate in national elections unlike any held since the Stalin era. But the differences are more show than substance.

Final voting for the new supreme governing body, the Congress of U.S.S.R. Peoples' Deputies, will end on March 26. It will convene in April when its first order of business will be to select 400 to 450 deputies for a new two-chamber Supreme Soviet. This will be the new permanent standing legislature.

The Congress will also elect a president, presumably Communist Party (CPSU) General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, to preside over the smaller Supreme Soviet.

The full Congress will meet once a year. It will be comprised of 1500 elected deputies—750 from territorial and 750 from national districts, as is the case today—and an additional 750 elected by the officially recognized "party, trade union, cooperative, youth, women's, veterans', academic, and artistic organizations."

To be elected, therefore, a candidate must first be nominated in one of three ways—by existing territorial districts based on population; by national districts, which give representation to the 14 non-Russian republics; or by the highest governing bodies of the "official" organizations.

This elaborate setup is generating as much confusion—and suspicion—as anticipation. There are good reasons for the skepticism.

Official groups retain control

As the election rules indicate, one-third (or 750) of the delegates to the Congress are reserved for organizations officially recognized by the government. What choice does this give to the Soviet people? These organizations have all been blind supporters of the bureaucracy for decades.

The Communist Party Politburo set a shining example for the other official organizations by nominating precisely 100 candidates for the 100 Congress deputy positions allocated to it. Lower party units
(continued on page 12)

Sex and sin are his business



By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN

I wonder how many of you have been invited to a "condom roast?" Probably not many who read this paper. But last week in Waterbury, Conn., there was a "condom roast" staged by Monsignor Joseph Looney (I'm not kidding, that's his name) of the Sacred Heart Church.

Monsignor Looney, the pastor of the church and a Catholic priest, knows quite a lot about sin, sex, and condoms. Sex and sin are the business of priests and TV evangelists. What would they do without sin and sex, how would they earn their living, who would support these full-grown men for the

whole of their lives unless they were experts on these two world-shaking issues?

Monsignor Looney held a "condom roast" in the parking lot of the Sacred Heart Church. The parishioners gathered there to hear his wise, Christian words. (It was not reported how many of the parishioners surrendered their condoms to the monsignor at the "burning.")

"We are criticizing the condemnation of America," Monsignor Looney told the crowd. And he hoped that "condom roasts" would spread to other churches. "Condoms mean cheap sex, yuppie love, calculated noninvolvement—they are a symbol, an instrument of denial, insulation from God and from one another."

"Sin taxes"

Fortunately, the burning of condoms did not actually take place—it was a symbolic burning which only involved the lighting of incense. Burning condoms probably smell like burning tires.

Father Looney said he decided against burning actual condoms because "we didn't want to pollute the air," and because "Catholics are allergic to condoms." He said, "I wouldn't come near one with a 10-

foot pole."

The holy Father is calling upon Gov. O'Neil of Connecticut to support extension of the state's existing "sin taxes" (on cigarettes and alcohol) to include condoms. "The fornicators should take responsibility as well as the smokers and drinkers," said Father Looney, adding that there was a "denial aspect" in the use of condoms.

"There's one thing that's worse than sin and that is the denial of sin. Condoms make denial easier.

They are a tax-funded cover-up when given out free in the hope of helping the poor." The good Father didn't say anything about the enormous tax breaks given the Catholic and other churches in the name of helping the poor.

AIDS prevention

The "denial aspect" of condoms spoken of by Father Looney is that "sinners" may not be "caught in the act" if they use condoms.

He could also point out that using condoms might prevent

pregnancy of unmarried teenagers and prevent infants from being born with AIDS. East Coast hospitals are filling up with children born of mothers afflicted with AIDS. The majority of those little infants will never leave the hospital.

Also, Father Looney might add, using condoms might prevent the spread of other sexual diseases such as syphilis. By using condoms, adult people could engage in sexual activities without the fear of having an unwanted pregnancy too.

Father Looney deeply believes that people who "sin" must suffer—whether it is teenagers, infants, or just ordinary human beings. Father Looney's God demands full punishment.

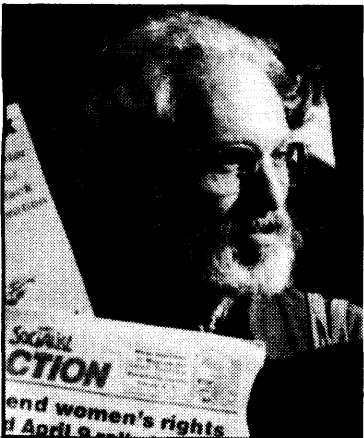
Father Looney belongs in the you-know-what bin. He should be put away where he cannot inflict himself on other people.

On the other hand, maybe he should have the company of Louis Sullivan, the newly appointed Secretary of Health and Human Services, who says he will protect the health of women by demanding the overturn of Roe v. Wade (the 1973 Supreme Court decision which legalized abortion). These two beauties belong together—in the same padded cell. ■



BEHIND THE LINES

Black bus driver framed by S.F. cops



By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

Imagine that you're at work early one morning—just doing your job. Suddenly, half-a-dozen police officers come by and taunt you, implying that you're not working fast enough. When you protest, the cops call you "nigger" and beat you to a pulp.

And that's not all. Later, you are placed on trial. The cops charge you with resisting arrest and (of all things) assaulting a police officer. You face a prison sentence—for just doing your job.

It might be hard to believe that such things take place. But that is indeed what happened to Gregory Wiggins, a young Black man and a member of my union, the Transport Workers Union Local 250-A. He and I are both bus drivers for the San Francisco Municipal Railway (MUNI), the city's public-transit system.

This is Gregory Wiggins' story, as he told it to me: "On Oct. 19, 1988, I was pulling my bus out of Woods Division. As I approached Bayshore Blvd., a cop stopped me and said there was a roadblock ahead. I said, 'Thank you. I'll move the bus up.'

"Before I could move the bus, a cop yelled at me, 'Move the motherfuckin' bus, nigger!'" After an exchange of words, Wiggins stated, a cop called out, "Let's get the nigger!"

Wiggins told me that he managed

to drive the bus to a parking lot. A MUNI supervisor opened the bus door, and several cops "rushed in, reached for my neck, and handcuffed me. They strangled me till I blacked out."

The cops then took turns hitting Wiggins with their hands and their flashlights. They threw him off the bus, Greg said, and "started dribbling my head like a basketball into the flowerbeds."

Refused treatment

At the police station, Wiggins was given no treatment for his wounds. After he was released, he went to St. Francis Hospital but was refused aid. A claims adjuster explained, "There's a discrepancy between your report and the police report."

Today, Gregory Wiggins must use a cane to walk. He suffered a fractured hip and severe bruises to his neck, back, and head. He has received no worker's compensation or assault pay (as specified in our union contract). He faces 30-days suspension from work without pay and up to a year in prison if he's

convicted on the assault charge.

The trial began on Feb. 21. In his opening statement, the assistant district attorney portrayed Gregory Wiggins as an apparent maniac who attacked six pistol-packing cops out of the blue one morning while he was on the job driving his bus.

The jury was informed that the cops remained "calm" under the dire circumstances. "The evidence will show," the prosecutor intoned, "that no police officer used the word 'nigger.'"

Furthermore, he told the jury, Officer Eugene Yoshii will testify that he saw Wiggins "with his body hanging outside the bus window and yelling profanities" at the police. Later, Wiggins allegedly bit Officer Yoshii on the finger and drew blood.

Officer Yoshii

Yoshii is just one of the goons that the prosecutor will place in the witness stand in an attempt to make the victim of a cop attack appear the criminal. According to Wiggins' attorney, however, Yoshii has been the subject of about 30 citizens'

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complaints charging violence and harassment.

Not long ago, a female rookie cop filed charges that "Yoshii

physically assaulted her, choked her unconscious, repeatedly raped and sodomized her, and forced her to have oral sex." (*San Francisco Chronicle*, May 22, 1987) The woman has filed a \$2 million lawsuit against him.

Judge Paul Alvarado has refused to permit Wiggins to introduce any evidence on the rape charge against Yoshii. But he agreed to allow testimony about another incident in which a bullet from Yoshii's gun hit a drug suspect in the cheek.

Many MUNI bus drivers have been attending the trial during our lunch breaks and splits in order to show support for brother Wiggins. In addition, 107 members of Transport Workers Union Local 100 in New York City have signed a letter demanding that the district attorney drop the charges.

As Gregory Wiggins told me, "I'm trying to get everyone behind my case—labor people, religious leaders, community leaders—everyone. Let's make some noise and tell the city that we won't tolerate these assaults any more." ■

What's Happenin' this Month:

San Francisco

"An Injury to One Is an Injury to All"
Benefit for Mark Curtis Defense Committee
Poetry reading by Piri Thomas, author of "Down These Mean Streets."
Saturday, March 4, 7:00 p.m.
Dolores St. Baptist Church
(15th St. & Dolores)
(415) 282-6255

**"The Case of the Legless Veteran—
The fight against McCarthyism
in the 1950s"**
Film, speakers: Howard Petrick, film maker,
and Asher Harer, organizer of Jimmy Katcher
defense in San Francisco Bay Area.
Friday, March 10, 8:00 p.m.
3435 Army St., suite 308

"The AIDS Crisis and the Case for Nationalized Health Care"

Panel discussion: Pat Norman, nat'l co-chair, 1987
Nat'l March for Lesbian and Gay Rights; John Belskus,
Activist, AIDS-ARC Vigil; Kristen Dempsey,
student AIDS educator, SFSU; Zakiya Somburu,
Bay Area Black Women's Health Project.
Friday, March 24, 8:00 p.m.
3435 Army St., suite 308

Boston

"Defend Latin American Political Prisoners"
Panel discussion: John Rubenstein, Northeast
Regional Director of Amnesty International; representa-
tive from New England Central American Network for
Emergency Response; and others.
Friday, March 10, 7:30 p.m.
Cambridge YMCA, 7 Temple St., Cambridge
617-497-0230

Minn. Black community protests murderous cops



Black students in front of Minneapolis City Hall on Feb. 7 protest against increase of cop violence.

By CINDY BURKE

"Tragic casualties in the war on crack" was how Minneapolis Police Chief John Laux summed up the brutal police murder of two Black senior citizens in their home on Jan. 25. Lloyd Smalley, 71, and Lillian Wiesse, 68, were killed in a fire started by a

downtown hotel were set upon by Minneapolis cops, who sprayed them with mace and beat them—leaving one with a broken wrist and another with a broken nose. Racist epithets such as "nigger" and "welfare scum" were shouted at the students. One woman charged that she was sexually fondled by a cop while being "frisked." Five students

immigrant who was beaten by police and whose efforts to file a complaint were rebuffed by the internal affairs department, wept as he told the meeting, "In Cuba, a Communist country, we all worked together, Black and white. I learned I was Black when I came to this country."

Protest leader Chris Nisan summed up the mood of the past week when he said, "We're making a stand. We're prepared to do whatever we have to to have our demands met."

Cops exposed as drug dealers

Nisan pointed out that there have been more cops charged with drug-related offenses during the past year than there have been drug dealers arrested as a result of the so called "war on drugs."

A number of Minneapolis police cars were discovered with large quantities of drugs hidden in their door panels and steering-wheel columns. Some Minneapolis police have been deeply involved in drug distributions and sales.

At the same time, the past year has seen the assaults on the Black, Latin, Native American and Southeast Asian communities

increase dramatically. These assaults by police have used front-end loaders, battering rams, and explosive devices.

Last year, police battered down the door of an elderly Black woman's house only to find they had the wrong address. She suffered psychological trauma severe enough to require hospitalization. The cops tried to neutralize the adverse publicity by sending the victim a bouquet of flowers.

Just a week before the murder of Smalley and Wiesse, police again threw tear gas and an explosive device into the wrong house. Added to these deadly assaults are countless examples of police forcing their way into homes on the pretext of searching for drugs—using their fists and clubs instead of grenades and bulldozers. A police brutality hotline set up last year by the city's Urban League and NAACP chapters has already forwarded 55 cases to city and federal agencies for investigation.

City authorities want cover-up

Mayor Don Fraser, a leading Minnesota liberal, has refused to charge the cops who murdered Smalley and Wiesse and has refused to order the charges dropped against the students in the hotel raid. His only action so far has been to endorse the city Civil Rights Commission's request for authority to investigate complaints against cops. The commission once had that right but it was rescinded in the 1970s by the City Council.

Police Chief Laux, however, could not stomach even this meager proposal. He refuses to allow the commission to investigate the charges, saying it would weaken his control of the department. The truth is that Laux and other city officials are terrified that the truth will come out about the police department's actions and the willing knowledge and approval of those actions at the highest levels of city government.

The anti-police brutality coalition's demand for a police review board with full subpoena powers deserves the support of every union and every organization which stands for social justice in this city. It is seen by leaders in the minority communities as a step toward bringing the cops under some measure of control.

It should be recognized, however, that you cannot reform the racism and brutality out of an institution whose purpose is the protection of property rights and repression of the dispossessed. Malcolm X once criticized the strategy of trying to reform the Democratic Party by likening it to trying to get a chicken to produce a duck egg. The same can be said of attempts to reform the police.

More demonstrations and rallies are planned to keep the heat on the racist police department and its apologists in city hall. This protest movement has inspired the Black community and its allies to a level of mobilization not seen here for many years. Supporters have the highest hopes for this movement, which in one short week has turned the attention of the entire city toward a cancerous growth nurtured by official complicity and liberal indifference. ■

"Your police are far more dangerous to us than the drug dealer."

"thunderflash" stun grenade thrown through their front window by members of the "Emergency Response Unit" of the Minneapolis Police Department.

The attack that killed Smalley and Wiesse was one of 400 such raids by Minneapolis cops in the past year. Ten percent of the raids involved the use of grenades. Other raids involved the use of huge front-end loaders driven through the walls of homes and explosive devices thrown by cops into "suspected crack houses," mostly in the city's Black community.

During the fatal Jan. 25 raid, police threw a grenade and then stormed into the house, forcing two men to the floor and handcuffing them. As the house burst into flames the cops ran outside, leaving the men on the floor and the elderly couple inside. The handcuffed men managed to get out by themselves, screaming to police that the old couple was still inside asleep. Police ignored all warnings by neighbors before and during the raid that the couple was still inside until the flames were so high and so dense that rescue was impossible.

The stun grenade that killed Smalley and Wiesse is spurned even by the notorious U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, which calls its use unjustified for a law-enforcement agency.

A police search of the house after the fire was put out recovered no drugs and no weapons. The two men arrested at the scene were not charged. Lloyd and Smalley were casualties not in a war on drugs but in what the community is calling a war on Blacks by Minneapolis cops.

Attacks spur protests

Just 11 days later, Black university students going home from a birthday celebration at a

were arrested.

On Feb. 7, Black students from the University of Minnesota Law School organized a demonstration of over 200 people at the office of Minneapolis Mayor Donald Fraser to protest these two police assaults. University of Minnesota student Chris Nisan, the spokesperson for the protest movement, told the crowd, "We understand that this is a historic condition. This has been happening since 1619."

The protesters served several demands upon the Mayor, including one for the establishment of "a permanent citizen review board with full subpoena power consisting of one representative of the state/city Human Rights Department and 11 others to be appointed by the African American community."

Other demands call for a blue-ribbon panel investigation of both incidents, an end to harassment of private citizens involved in community organizing, antiracism training for all policemen, and disciplinary action and suspension of those police involved in both incidents.

The protest at City Hall was the first of a week-long series of broad community mobilizations led by the students. Testimony at meetings by victims of the Minneapolis cops exposed the lie of the liberal and enlightened image of the city so carefully cultivated by the news media, city officials, and Democratic and Republican party politicians.

One resident of the North side of Minneapolis told Police Chief Laux at a community meeting organized to protest the killings of Smalley and Wiesse, "The drug dealer is not going to bother me because I'm not a threat to him. Your police are far more dangerous to us than the drug dealer."

At the same protest meeting, a Cuban

O.C.A.W. leader discusses possibilities of labor party

By JAKE COOPER

ST. PAUL, Minn.—On Jan. 30, Tony Mazzocchi (international secretary-treasurer of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union) addressed the speakers' club of the trades and labor assembly here. Over 100 workers heard him speak on the question of labor political action.

Mazzocchi has been a national figure in the labor movement for 41 years. He was a constant supporter of the Democratic Party for most of these years. He supported Jesse Jackson in the last presidential campaign. And when questioned about new Democratic Party head Ron Brown, his answer was, "Wait and see."

In spite of this, Mazzocchi's speech before the labor assembly was a breath of fresh air. He said it's time to talk about a labor party. He also emphasized that the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947—which limits the right to strike and organize mass pickets—has hamstrung the American labor movement.

The labor movement is down to 13 million members from a high of 36 million, he said, and a new approach is needed to attract members. Mazzocchi pointed out that every

major industrial country in the world has a labor party—except the United States.

There was a lot of discussion from the floor. Some people asked, "How do we start a labor party?" Mazzocchi's answer was that now is the time for discussion only. Others wanted to know, "Can we run candidates?" Mazzocchi replied, "No, we can only discuss the general question."

Mazzocchi didn't mention the terrible role of the Democratic/Farmer Labor Party in Minnesota. Two years ago, for example, Democratic Party Governor Rudy Perpich sent the National Guard to break the strike of the Hormel workers.

More recently, Mayor Don Fraser of Minneapolis—also a Democrat—used the cops to murder two Blacks in a "drug raid." And St. Paul's Democratic Party administration sent police against the can workers here.

Mazzocchi didn't explain that the Democratic Party is controlled by the employers. If the bosses control your union, for example, you'd be right to call it a company union. In the same way, if they control a political party, it's a party of the capitalists—not of the workers. ■

Boston forum highlights fight for women's rights

On Jan. 27, Boston Socialist Action sponsored a forum on the fight for women's rights. The speakers were Alexei Folger, from Socialist Action; Karen Uminsky, from Mass. Choice; Gustie Trainor, a long-time socialist and activist in the women's movement; and Toni Troop, Boston NOW Vice President for Action. We are reprinting below the speeches by Gustie Trainor and Toni Troop.

Gustie Trainor



Dave Walsh/Socialist Action

Ever since the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was proposed as an amendment to the Constitution in 1973 and adopted by the U.S. Congress, it has been an ongoing struggle—a struggle by women, their organizations, and supporters—to get the 38 out of 50 states to ratify this amendment so it could become a law. I'd like to read the ERA to you in case you haven't read it.

"Section 1—Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex.

"Section 2—The Congress shall have the power to enforce appropriate legislation for provisions of this article.

"Section 3—This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification."

By June 30, 1982, 35 states had ratified the ERA, three states short of the 38 necessary for ratification. There's no doubt that a majority of people were in favor of passage of the ERA at this time. A Gallup poll in 1980 showed that 61 percent of the population was in favor of the ERA, the same year that an NBC poll showed that 71 percent were in favor.

The opposition was so dedicated, however, to defeat the ERA that four states rescinded their ratification from the pressure. If Congress had already passed the ERA, why all the fuss about the states ratifying it?

Despite the rising support for the ERA and its passage in Congress, it still has not been ratified by the necessary number of states.

Why are we having so much trouble, why have some states rescinded their ratification? Both Republicans and Democrats who are in the legislature oppose the ERA. Also corporate interests who are opposed to women in leadership positions in business and government. They want to keep women in low-wage positions.

The passage of the ERA is crucial to every aspect of women's lives. Reproductive rights and the ERA are key to women's economic and reproductive freedom. We must direct all our efforts to pass the ERA and to keep pro-choice abortion laws. I consider these two laws to be basic rights of women as human beings.

Toni Troop

Over the last month and a half since we started to organize for the April 9 march, we've been unable to keep up with all the calls that have been coming into the office from a wide range of organizations and from people of all ages and economic classes. I was

in the office the other day for just a few hours and had three calls from women under the age of 16.

Abortion is a baseline issue; it is a key to all women's rights. But it's insufficient without access. NOW is committed to access



for abortion and we are pleased that our state is one of only 13 that now has Medicaid funding for abortions, and we will continue working to make sure that this remains so.

Presently there are 25 referendums in different states around the country aimed at eliminating abortion rights. The "pro-life" movement—or anti-choice movement—is trying different languages and different referendums in different states to see which one is the most effective to confuse people. The name "pro-life" is an example of how they so cleverly confuse people about where they really stand on the issue.

Over the last eight years with the Reagan administration these attacks have escalated, and we can see that Bush has no intention of changing that trend.

But something that we're concerned about is the fact this is not just a legal issue, it's not just a constitutional issue, it's not just a

political issue—it's a women's issue. And women are being left out of the discussion. On Channel 7 a few weeks ago they had a debate about abortion rights with two white men—you know, there's something wrong with this picture! Women are being left out of the discussion, and it's our bodies and our lives that we're talking about here.

In addition to the legislation that is being proposed to curtail our rights, Operation Rescue, which is the activist, right-wing group that many of us have seen face to face over the last few months, is out there to deny women's access to abortion. But they are such a small minority that even if they all get active, our numbers are so much greater—and we have to be as visible as they are.

There are many discussions going on around the country as to what is the best tactic to use to counter Operation Rescue. Getting out there at 7 a.m. every Saturday morning is tiring, but women and men are going because they understand what is at stake. There are many options we are discussing, and the answer is not clear. But what is clear is that as long as they are there, we have to remain visible.

The march is called "March for Women's Equality and Women's Lives." It's very important that we bring the largest numbers to D.C. in April. We hope to bring at least 10,000 from Boston alone. It's also important that we get out there to not just maintain the rights that we have—but to expand our rights. It's unfortunate we are impeded from moving forward with our agenda by having to continually fight for a right we won 16 years ago. But we will not give up this fight.

We are confident that this is going to be the largest march on Washington. We are confident that the majority of people in this country accept the right of women to safe, legal, and accessible abortion as well as women's basic right of equal protection through passage of the ERA.

We're going to go to Washington and we're going to send one loud, clear voice to our Congress, president, Supreme Court, and legislatures that women's equality and women's lives are a national priority. We're not going to be silenced by George Bush or Operation Rescue or the media for mobilizing for the long haul for women's rights—and we look forward to working with all of you over the next few months.

... women's rights

(continued from page 16)

not appear to be attracting many new recruits to their cause. They promised 3000 protesters in Atlanta, but only had about 700. On Oct. 29, their activities ranged in size from a dozen to a few hundred people. In many areas, Operation Rescue uses the same busloads of people to cover several cities.

A response from women

Operation Rescue people have been able to temporarily shut down some clinics in several cities. But they have been turned away by organized pro-choice forces in other places—such as Boston on Oct. 29.

The Boston activists organized 2000 people to demonstrate visibly that they, not the Operation Rescue fanatics, are the majority. By outmobilizing these anti-women forces, they effectively isolated them and helped increase the pressure on police and other government agencies to enforce a woman's right to choose abortion.

Some of the smarter anti-abortion groups have argued that Operation Rescue's bulldozing method of shutting down birth-control clinics would force a response from women. And they are right. Around the country, pro-choice groups have been responding to Operation Rescue's attacks.

Activists come out at six in the morning, rain or shine, ready to defend the clinics. Some are women who were active years ago when abortion was illegal in most states. Others are young women who, having grown up with legal abortion as an option, are enraged by attempts to interfere with the clinics' operations.

Terrorism over the years

While the efforts of Operation Rescue have been very well publicized, terrorism and violence from right-wing forces are not new. The National Abortion Federation has been tracking these activities and keeping statistics for years.

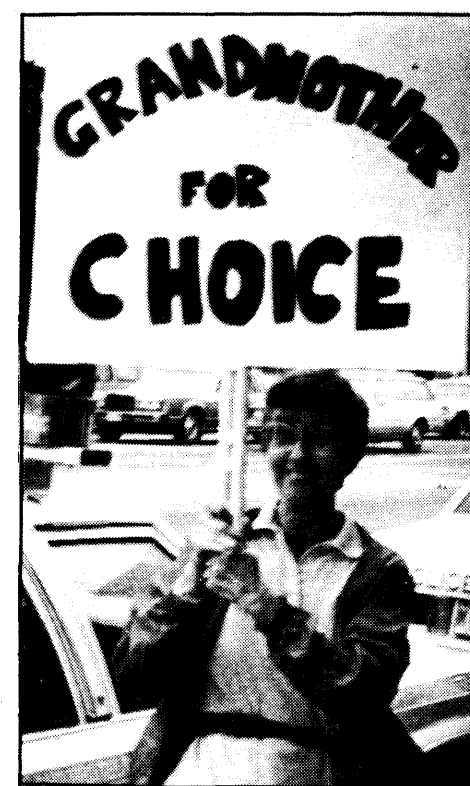
Between 1977 and 1987, they report, there

were 70 arsons and bombings, 34 attempted arsons and bombings, 213 bomb threats, 216 clinic invasions, 41 assaults and batteries, 2 kidnappings, 191 instances of vandalism, 143 clinics beset by hate mail and/or harassing phone calls (which included 61 death threats), and 624 clinics whose services were affected by picketing and blockades.

The misnamed "right-to-life" groups use terrorism because they do not have mass support. A majority of the people in this country continue to support the right of women to choose to have abortions—despite the sustained assaults on this right by governmental authorities.

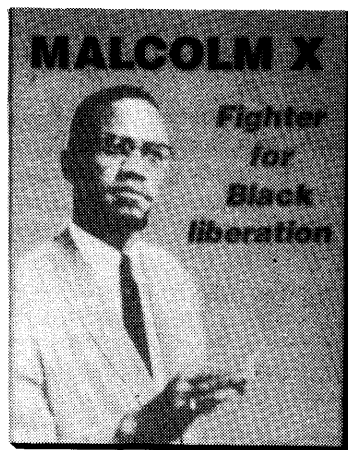
NOW's call for the April 9 demonstration is meeting with unprecedented enthusiasm. Abortion is no longer viewed as a dark secret which women can only whisper about to each other. Women and men who are concerned about women's rights and civil liberties in general are joining the struggle both at the clinics and in building a massive public demonstration.

The battle to ensure abortion rights is important for all of those who want to make this world a better place for women, for working people, and for children.



Tina Beacock/Socialist Action

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L.A.P.D. 'rescues' Operation Rescue

By EDIE FOX and MARTY DENZEL

LOS ANGELES—Thanks to the intervention of the Los Angeles Police Dept., Operation Rescue, the right-wing anti-abortion group that has occupied and closed abortion clinics in cities around the country, was saved from a defeat at the hands of pro-choice forces.

On Saturday, Feb. 11, a major test of strength occurred between pro-choice activists and anti-abortion forces outside a clinic in Los Angeles. The confrontation was the result of Operation Rescue's attempt to close down abortion clinics in the Los Angeles area for the first time.

Aware of Operation Rescue's plans, a coalition of women's groups had prepared to defend the abortion clinics in the city against the threat of attack. Sizable groups of 100 to 200 people gathered at six women's health clinics at 5:30 Saturday morning.

Meanwhile, Operation Rescue spent the night before in churches in Long Beach. Their scouts found two unprotected clinics (one block apart), and about 300 of them gathered there, blocking the entrances and shutting them down. When this fact was communicated to the pro-choice activists defending the other clinics, they all descended upon the two besieged clinics.

The Operation Rescue occupiers were rudely surprised when they found themselves confronted with and surrounded by over 1000 militant pro-choice defenders who were shouting, "Right to lifers, your name's a lie! You don't care if women die!"

Police to the rescue

With the situation beginning to heat up, about 75 police in riot gear showed up and closed off the street in front of the clinics. Pro-choice picketers were ordered to keep their lines moving, while Operation Rescue was permitted to continue occupying clinic property and to sit on the sidewalk.

In effect, the police played the role of a protective barrier for Operation Rescue to continue their illegal occupation of the

clinics, while at the same time harassing pro-choice activists who were exercising their democratic right to protect women's rights.

This is no different than the role played by police during strikes by workers, where they protect strikebreakers and harass, beat, and arrest striking workers who are exercising their democratic right to protect their jobs and living standards.

When in the history of labor or free speech struggles have the police shown the same solicitude and tolerance to workers and demonstrators that they demonstrated to Operation Rescue?

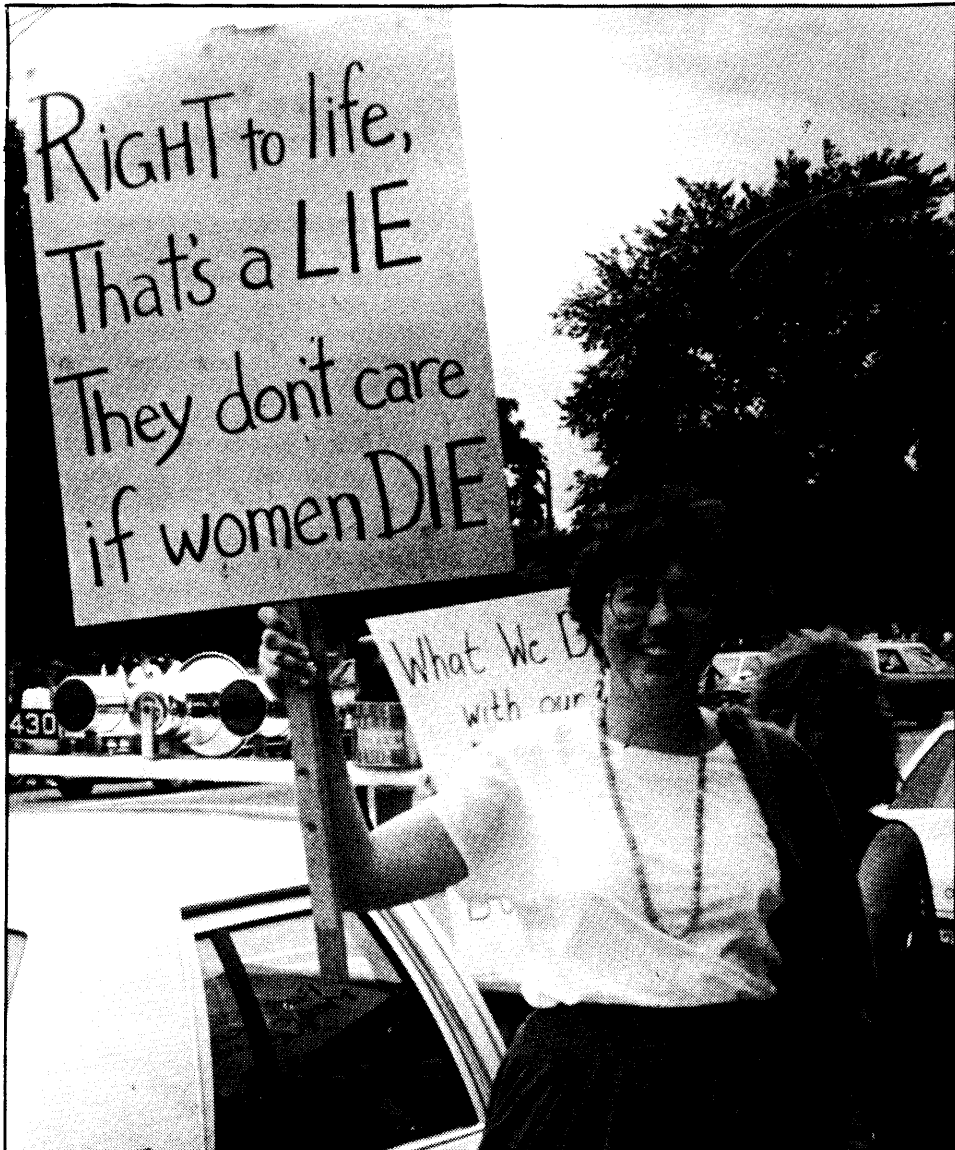
Because the police took no actions to allow the clinics to open, clients were unable to have access to the clinics' services. Ironically, Operation Rescue had targeted clinics that do not perform many abortions, so no actual abortions were prevented. What they did deny was treatment for pregnant women and women needing other types of gynecological care.

No one was arrested; nominally because the owner of one of the clinics declined to press charges and the other owner could not be found. Operation Rescue forces felt victorious; they got lots of publicity, they closed the clinics, and no one was arrested. As one of them was leaving he shouted gratefully to the row of cops: "Thanks, LAPD."

But it should be pro-choice forces who feel victorious. They outmobilized Operation Rescue, and through the tactic of the "flying picket," outnumbered the anti-women fanatics at the besieged clinics. Only the intervention of police prevented the pro-choice demonstrators from re-opening the clinics themselves.

Meanwhile, Operation Rescue has stated that its Feb. 11 disruption was only a dress rehearsal for what it says will be much larger abortion clinic assaults during the weekend of March 22-24 in Los Angeles.

In response, Dr. Joan Babbott, executive director of Planned Parenthood in Los Angeles, said that pro-choice groups expect to have a much larger number of clinic defenders in place to give Operation Rescue a welcome.



Tina Beacock/Socialist Action

Labor Dept. seeks to gut 'homework' laws

By AMANDA CHAPMAN

The government is carrying out a campaign to intensify the exploitation of women workers. At the same time that attacks have been stepped up against a woman's right to choose abortion, industrial homework is being legalized in the garment industry—where 90 percent of workers are women.

During the past month, the Department of Labor (DOL) has been holding hearings on whether to lift the 47-year ban on production of women's apparel in the home. This action would be the final stage of what Labor Secretary Ann Dore McLaughlin calls "a two-tier approach" to legalizing homework in all fields of the garment industry.

In November, the department lifted bans on homework in the five other garment industries where it had been prohibited: gloves and mittens, embroidery, buttons and buckles, handkerchiefs, and some jewelry. The prohibition against work at home on knitted outerwear had been lifted in 1984.

Manufacture of most clothing in the home was outlawed in 1942 because the government had found it impossible to enforce the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) without the work being centralized in factories.

Studies conducted at the time of the passage of the FLSA and ever since have consistently shown that whenever homework has been legal in a given industry, there have been widespread violations of wage and hours laws as well as child-labor laws.

At the 1979 New York State hearings on industrial homework, one woman testified that she was paid \$2.50 for a blouse that took two hours to make and \$5 for a shirt that also took two hours to make. At that time the minimum wage was \$2.90 per hour (which was already too low!).

More recently, a farmer's wife described how she lost money sewing clothes at home over an eight-month period. The money she earned working fulltime did not cover her travel expenses to pick up and deliver the work and the cost of the new sewing machine

she had to buy.

When homeworkers have children, they are frequently enlisted to help meet production quotas. Often young children end up using scissors, needles, or other sharp instruments. The time they spend working is usually taken away from their study time or—according to some witnesses—the time needed to sleep.

As an alternative to the prohibition of industrial homework, the DOL proposes a certification system that ostensibly would make it easier to enforce the provisions of the FLSA. This system has not worked in any of the industries in which homework is legalized. A minority of employers register with the DOL and of those, most are guilty of some violation of the FLSA but are not prosecuted.

One of the problems with enforcement of homework regulations is that the government usually only investigates an employer when a complaint is filed. But all the evidence shows that homeworkers rarely complain. Many of them are undocumented immigrants who fear deportation. Many of them fear that they will be punished for putting their children to work or for tax evasion.

Also, since homeworkers are isolated from each other, it is very difficult for them to organize themselves into unions to defend their rights and working conditions against attacks by the employer or the government. Without daily contact with other workers in their industry, they have no way of knowing if their working conditions are exceptional or not.

"Worker—or bosses'—flexibility?"

The main rationale advanced for legalizing homework is that it enables mothers to work at home so that they can be with their children. Allan McMillan, Deputy Assistant Labor Secretary in charge of enforcing homework regulations, has said that "Clearly, the demographics show that worker flexibility is something we need to achieve."

Clearly, McMillan has never tried to work and take care of young children at the same

time! Most mothers today know what it's like to work all day and take care of the children at night. Imagine working and simultaneously taking care of the children all of your waking hours! This isn't flexibility for the benefit of the worker; it's flexibility for the benefit of the employer.

What is needed is not "worker flexibility" but free childcare as part of the public-school system, adequate parental leave, and

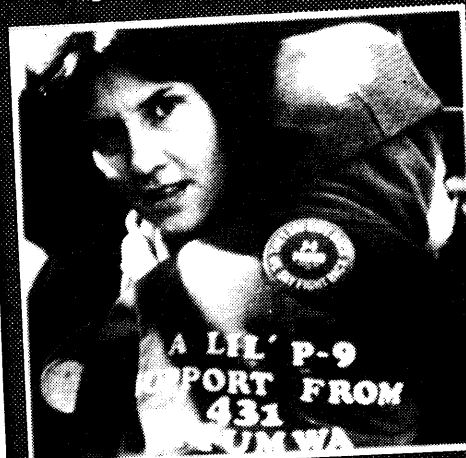
reproductive freedom. It does not do children any good to have their mother at home when she has to work 16-hour days at below minimum wage—especially if she needs the help of her children just to meet production quotas.

The International Ladies Garment Workers Union, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, and other unions are opposed to the legalization of homework. Not only will organizing these workers become more difficult; it will act to lower wage and safety standards in other industries as well.

The Department of Labor's campaign to legalize homework is directed against women who (because of a lack of social services and union representation) are easily victimized. This is part and parcel of the employers' and the government's attempts to increase capitalist profits by sacrificing the living standards of American working people. ■

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Socialist Action lawsuit featured in ACLU news

On March 28, a federal judge in San Francisco will hear arguments for a Temporary Restraining Order preventing prosecution of the 1988 Socialist Action election campaign committee for their refusal to disclose the names and addresses of contributors.

The following article appeared in January-February 1989 ACLU news, the publication of the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California (ACLU-NC).

The ACLU-NC filed a lawsuit on Jan. 19 in U.S. District Court on behalf of Socialist Action, a small political party headquartered in San Francisco, demanding that the party not be required to disclose the names of its campaign contributors.

According to ACLU-NC, cooperating attorney Mark White, who is litigating the case along with cooperating attorney Anna Rossi and ACLU-NC staff counsel Alan Schlosser, "Because of its origins, size, political aims and activities, Socialist Action and its members have a genuine and reasonably grounded fear that party members and contributors would suffer threats, harassment and reprisals if their identities were to be publicly disclosed."

Socialist Action was formed in 1983 when its original members left the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) after a dispute over

political goals. In an earlier lawsuit, it was proven that the SWP and its members were subjected to FBI infiltration, surveillance and harassment for many years.

Since 1984, Socialist Action has run candidates in various local elections; in November 1988 plaintiff Joseph Ryan ran for the Board of Supervisors, gaining 1 percent of the vote, and plaintiff Sylvia Weinstein ran for the Board of Education, gaining 3 percent of the vote.

California's Political Reform Act of 1974 requires that controlled campaign committees of candidates for local elective office file disclosure statements with the local registrar of voters which identify all persons who make financial contributions of over \$100. The required information includes the contributors' full name, address, occupation, and employer.

Exemption

However, the campaign committees of Socialist Action have declined to provide this information based on the understanding that they have a right of exemption under the First Amendment of the Constitution as decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1982 case of *Brown v. Socialist Workers '74 Campaign Committee (Ohio)*.

The party withheld the disclosure information in elections spanning several years, and

the withholding was never questioned or challenged.

Just prior to the 1988 election, however, the San Francisco District Attorney demanded the contributors' information from plaintiff Joni Jacobs, treasurer of the Ryan and Weinstein Campaign Committee. Despite a written request for exemption from Jacobs, the District Attorney threatened criminal prosecution against Jacobs, Ryan and Weinstein if they did not comply.

According to Ryan, "The effect of the DA holding over us the threat of prosecution can only have a dampening effect on the ability of small parties—including socialist, Black or labor parties, for example—to function effectively."

"Many people who would contribute to such parties would be deterred from doing so for fear of harassment or reprisals."

"We do not hide our ideas or what we stand for. Our intent is to protect the First Amendment rights of those who contribute to our campaigns," Ryan said.

The suit charges that Socialist Action members and contributors have good reason to fear reprisal. According to attorney Rossi, "Not only is there a public record of official harassment and persecution waged against the SWP (including individuals who are now in Socialist Action) by law enforcement agencies, there is also evidence that the FBI

and the San Francisco Police Department surveilled and harassed many socialist and dissident political organizations with whom Socialist Action has formed political coalitions in this city.

"In addition, there have been repeated instances of private hostility and harassment experienced by Socialist Action members, including assaults and death threats," Rossi said.

History of spying

Plaintiff Weinstein was a member of the SWP from 1944 until 1983, when she helped found Socialist Action.

"In all the movements I have been involved in, from Fair Play for Cuba, to the antiwar movement to the women's movement, I have been harassed by the FBI," Weinstein said.

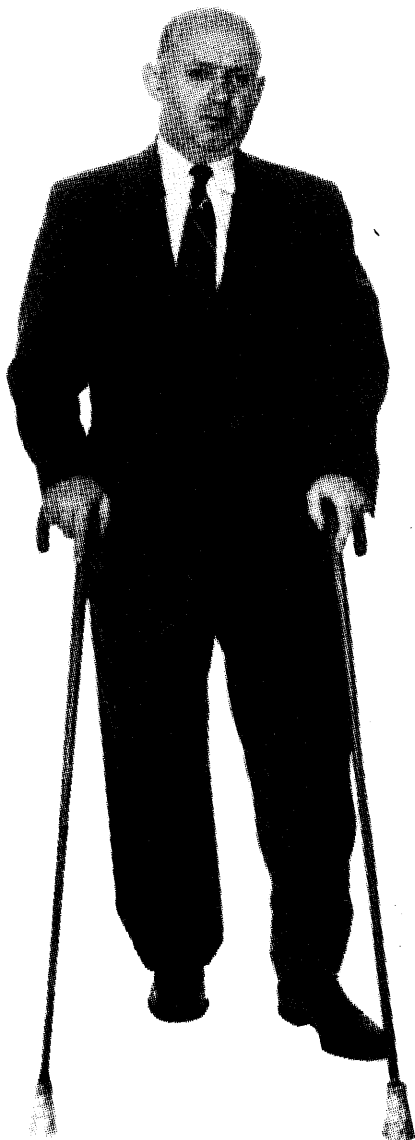
"They came to jobs that I was on and tried to question me, they came to my home and in a very loud voice said 'This is the FBI—all my neighbors in the building knew about it—the janitor told me they even looked through my garbage."

"They even spied on meetings of the women's movement that we held in Glide Memorial Church in 1969 and 1970.

"So my experience has been that they have been involved with spying on me personally and that they have not stopped any of this at all," Weinstein charged.

The lawsuit asks the court to declare that the reporting requirements of the Political Reform Act are unconstitutional as applied to the plaintiffs. It also seeks a Temporary Restraining Order and an injunction preventing the Registrar of Voters from requiring disclosure of Socialist Action contributors and preventing the District Attorney from commencing any criminal prosecution or civil enforcement action against the party for either past or future refusal to disclose the names of its campaign contributors. ■

James Kutcher, victor in 1950's civil liberties fight, lifelong socialist



Jimmy Kutcher, known internationally in the labor and socialist movements as "The Legless Veteran," died on Feb. 10 in Brooklyn, N.Y., after a prolonged illness. He was 76 years old.

Kutcher, who was a founding member of the Socialist Workers Party in 1938, lost both of his legs at the Battle of San Pietro during World War II. Soon after the war, Kutcher got a job as a file-clerk at the Veterans Administration for \$36 a week.

But because of his membership in the SWP, the government fired him from his job. This was the infamous McCarthy "witchhunt" era; the SWP had been placed on Attorney General Clark's "subversive list."

Kutcher and the SWP responded by setting up the Kutcher Civil Rights Committee to fight for his job reinstatement. It was one of the most dramatic and widely supported defense cases of the McCarthy era. The Committee also fought the government's attempt to evict him and his parents from their apartment and to revoke his disability pension.

In 1955, after a 10-year fight, Kutcher left a court hearing in disbelief; he had won his case against the government.

Following his successful legal battle, Kutcher devoted himself to building the revolutionary party based on the program of the SWP and of the Trotskyist movement. One of his most important contributions was his book, "The Case of the Legless Veteran," in which he tells how his contact with socialist ideas in the turbulent days of the Depression changed his life.

For his commitment to the founding program of the SWP, Kutcher—along with over 150 other Trotskyists—was undemocratically expelled from the SWP in 1983. Following his expulsion, he became a member of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency.

The next issue of Socialist Action will include a more complete article celebrating Kutcher's life and contributions.

A memorial meeting, sponsored by the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, is scheduled for April 22-23 in New York. For further information call (212) 633-2007.

Socialist Action Forum in San Francisco

Film: "The Case of the Legless Veteran—The Fight Against McCarthyism in the 1950s"
Speakers: Howard Petrick, film maker, and Asher Harer, organizer of Jimmy Kutcher Defense in San Francisco Bay Area.
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Christic Institute raises \$1.2 million bond, appeals judge's ruling

By JEFF MACKLER

The Christic Institute, a public-interest law firm that filed a landmark suit in 1986 against key witnesses involved in the Contragate scandal, has come under increasing attack by the courts. But it is fighting back.

In mid-February, Miami Federal District Judge James Lawrence King gave the Christic Institute seven days to post a \$1.2 million bond to cover lawyers' fees for some of the 29 defendants mentioned in the suit.

The Christic Institute was barred from pursuing its appeal of Judge King's June 23, 1988, dismissal of its lawsuit until the \$1.2 million bond was posted. The money is to be placed in escrow pending the outcome of the suit.

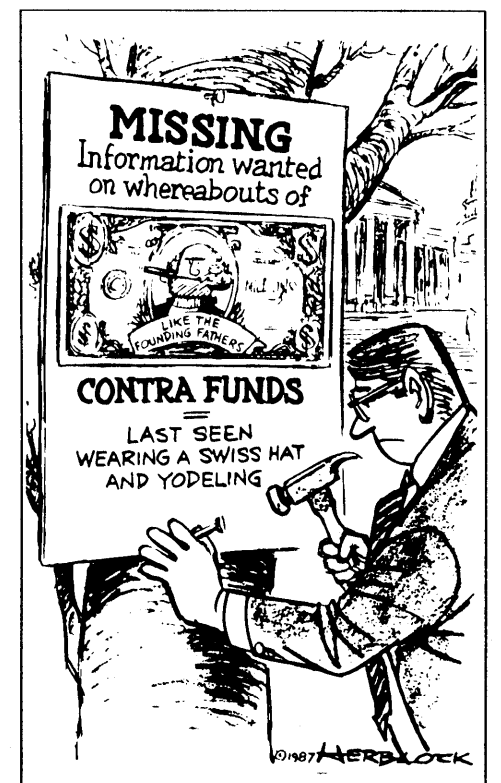
Judge King also ordered that all Christic Institute assets be seized if Institute officials did not post the bond money in the allotted time. According to Christic Institute officials, Judge King's punitive ruling has no legal precedent.

The Christic Institute lawsuit was filed on behalf of plaintiffs Martha Honey and Tony Avirgan, two U.S. journalists who conducted original research into illegal U.S. government operations after Avirgan was severely injured in a suspected CIA bombing on May 30, 1984. Avirgan was covering a press conference of contra leader Eden Pastora in La Penca, Costa Rica.

The lawsuit charges 29 defendants with criminal conspiracy (including the La Penca bombing), drug and arms trafficking, violations of the U.S. Neutrality Act, and other crimes. The defendants include Robert Owen, Lt. Col. Oliver North's assistant; retired generals Richard Secord and John Singlaub; businessman Albert Hakim; and John Hull, the notorious CIA agent who operates a contra training camp in Costa Rica.

Upon learning of Judge King's bond order, Retired Major Gen. John Singlaub told the press that this ruling was like an air strike against the Institute—a "blow from which it would never recover."

But Christic Institute supporters across the



country proved Singlaub wrong, and in a matter of 12 days (they were able to secure a five-day extension), supporters rallied to the cause, raising the unprecedented sum of \$1.2 million.

To publicize their efforts to bring the 29 Contragate defendants to justice, Christic Institute support groups are organizing public meetings and other fund-raising activities around the country in the coming weeks.

Christic Institute Director Sarah Nelson reported that the 60,000-member American Trial Lawyers Association intended to help the Institute fight Judge King's punitive ruling.

The Christic Institute has filed a comprehensive seven-part appeal of Judge King's dismissal that documents the legal errors in his decision. Nelson said she was confident that Judge King's ruling would be overturned. ■

Little enthusiasm for major rivals in Chicago elections

By MARK HARRIS and ADAM SHILS

The following article was written just prior to the Feb. 28 Democratic Party primary election in Chicago. The general election will take place in April.

CHICAGO—Six years ago, Harold Washington won election as this city's first Black mayor. Washington's 1983 campaign, which confronted the barely concealed racism of his opponents, became much more than just another election for the Black community.

Black pride, social justice, and political reform were the battle cries, as the Washington movement rallied tens of thousands of Blacks and others to its banner. As the racist Democratic Party machine floundered, many people believed that a new era had begun in Chicago politics.

Washington died several months after winning reelection in 1987. As the current race for mayor unfolds, it is clear that the Washington movement has not survived its leader's death.

There is no great outpouring of anti-racist sentiment such as accompanied the last two Chicago elections. On the eve of the primary election, there is, in fact, little enthusiasm for any of the major contenders still in the race: Mayor Eugene Sawyer, Cook County State's Attorney Richard Daley, and Alderman Tim Evans.

No real issues dominate this campaign. Even the non-issues that defined the 1988 presidential election (such as who loved the Pledge of Allegiance the most) appear as hard-hitting issues of substance compared to the nitpicking blather that passes for "addressing the issues" in this election.

"There's just no electricity out there," admits 36th Ward Alderman William Banks, a Daley man. Small wonder.

Avoiding the code-words

The current frontrunner is Richard Daley, son of the infamous "Boss" Daley. Daley has been running a sophisticated campaign, which by Chicago standards means that he has chosen not to stress the traditional code-words for race.

Daley has campaigned frequently in the Black community, and has appointed a Black woman, Avis Lavelle, as his press secretary. Some observers have made the point that Daley's orientation toward the Black community is designed more to impress liberal voters living along the city's lakefront than it is to actually secure Black support.

Mayor Sawyer is running a distant second to Daley in the primary. He is burdened by the widespread—and accurate—perception that he was hand-picked for office by the white racist forces who opposed Harold Washington. Despite his endorsement by Jesse Jackson, Sawyer is perceived by many as a machine hack who doesn't want to rock the boat.

Sawyer is further burdened by his trance-like speaking style, which has inspired media references to him as "Mayor Mumbles" or "The Human Valium." Not that Sawyer has much to shout about; his record since taking office is indeed slim.

For example, Sawyer claims credit for reorganizing the Chicago Housing Authority and installing a new board and executive director who has imposed Draconian restrictions on tenants' civil rights.

Since September, Black housing projects have been terrorized by a series of brutal "drug raids" by police and security agents. As in South Africa, residents and guests are required to produce passes in order to enter their homes.

Evans' "independent" campaign

Alderman Tim Evans, who is running as an "independent" in the general election on what he calls the Harold Washington Party ticket, is attempting to portray himself as the mantle-bearer of Washington's "progressive coalition."

A latecomer to reform politics, Evans was a key Washington lieutenant. He is seen as the main leader of the Black forces that have opposed Mayor Sawyer as a sellout to the old machine. He is supported by many social activists and has received favorable coverage



Tina Beacock/Socialist Action

An estimated 35,000 people scrape out an existence on Chicago's streets. Thousands more low-income families face a severe shortage of affordable housing.

in *The Guardian* and the *People's Daily World*.

The Evans campaign has in no way, however, sought to promote the kind of independent mass action necessary to champion the demands of working people and the Black community. There is actually little in his program that would separate him from the other main candidates.

Evans responds to the education crisis, for example, with the usual liberal lectures on why taxes must be raised. His only progressive credentials consist in his frequent invocation of Washington's name.

Evans is a longtime Democratic Party supporter. His withdrawal from the February Democratic primary was purely a tactical electoral maneuver, not a step toward independent electoral action—which would mean breaking from the Democratic Party.

Evans calculated that if both he and Sawyer ran in the primary, the Black vote would be divided between the two of them and Daley would win. Evans therefore believes he has a better chance of defeating Daley, the probable primary winner, in a one-on-one contest in the general election in which he will be the only Black candidate.

A top-down affair

The fracturing of the forces that swept Washington into office has disappointed and surprised many of his supporters. But it was not inconsistent with the nature of Washington's movement, which was a top-down affair. Washington never saw his enormous popular appeal as a means to

organize and mobilize poor people, Blacks, and the labor movement—except on election day.

This was the fundamental limitation in Washington's politics of reform: his unwillingness to raise any substantial challenge to the big business movers and shakers who run the city—or more accurately have run the city into the ground in pursuit of private profit.

Such a challenge would, of course, require mobilizing tens of thousands of Blacks and working people in a new mass social-protest movement that could generate the kind of "street heat" necessary to fight for the interests of the hungry, jobless, homeless people who inhabit this city.

But the movement for Black pride and political empowerment that Washington symbolized was channeled into little more than a factional battle inside the Democratic Party.

The field of action was restricted to City Hall, as Washington contended with the machine hacks ensconced in the city council. The Black community that had mobilized to put Washington in office remained on the outside looking in.

Decline in living standards

Washington worked hard to cement a solid working relationship with big business, which precluded a mass-action orientation to fight for social justice. The result? Despite some reforms in city government, social conditions continued their steady decline during Washington's term.

A 1988 United Way study, in fact, documents a "significant deterioration" in the quality of life in Chicago over the last 20 years. A few facts hit hard:

- Thirty-three percent of the city's Black population live in poverty. Half of all minority teenagers can't find jobs, and almost as many drop out of the public schools.

- One of every four residents of Chicago is on public assistance. Yet a welfare check in the city is worth less than half its 1970 value.

- An estimated 35,000 homeless people scrape out an existence on Chicago's streets. Thousands more low-income families face a severe shortage of affordable housing.

- Chicago's infant-mortality rate is one of the highest in the nation, with the non-white rate double that of whites. Some West Side communities face a rate higher than any country in the Western Hemisphere except Haiti.

- Some 5000 children—almost all poor—suffer lead poisoning every year in Chicago. A congressional report ranks Chicago toward the bottom of major urban areas in its program to screen housing for lead.

- About 200,000 jobs, many of them higher-paying manufacturing jobs, have vanished over the last 15 years, replaced—if they are replaced—by low-paying service jobs.

Yet local business leaders see a different problem: Chicago is in trouble because wages are too high! Such was the conclusion of the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club, a local business group, in a report issued last year.

A social time bomb

Business groups remain optimistic, however. A columnist for *Crain's Chicago Business* explains, for example, that the city's high unemployment rate, with its increased labor-pool size, is an encouraging development for Chicago's "business climate."

Over the last 10 years, in fact, a boom in downtown development has added more than a million square feet of office skyscrapers, luxury hotels, shops, and restaurants at an annual investment rate of at least a half-billion dollars. Tax breaks, low-interest loans, and other forms of welfare for the rich have encouraged such activity.

"This side-by-side spectacle of poverty and plenty, of despair and dynamism," concludes John McCarron in the *Chicago Tribune* (Feb. 7, 1989) "is both a civic embarrassment and a social time bomb."

Has any of this unrestrained profiteering trickled down to Chicago's working-class and minority neighborhoods? No. These neighborhoods are hurting. And it is getting worse.

The major candidates offer no solutions to the city's crisis. How could it be otherwise? The Democratic and Republican parties are parties of big business, which is responsible for the social crisis facing working people.

Working people need their own independent political party, one that can mobilize both at the ballot box and in the streets. And that is an idea whose relevancy will come into sharper focus as the "social time bomb" of "poverty and plenty" continues to tick away.

Chicago Socialist Action is calling for a vote for Omari Musa, the Socialist Workers Party's write-in candidate for mayor. As a socialist, Musa stands clearly against the Democratic Party and for independent working-class political action. ■

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U.S. condemnation of chemical weapons reeks with hypocrisy

By HAYDEN PERRY

The U.S. government has again proven that it definitely has the franchise on hypocrisy.

Recently the United States beat the drums for an air strike against Libya to destroy an alleged chemical weapons plant being built there—underlining its resoluteness by shooting down two Libyan fighter planes last month.

The Libyans invited the U.S. officials to inspect the plant, but the administration wasn't interested. The White House was more interested in using Libya as a foil to conduct a self-serving propaganda campaign against the use of chemical weapons.

But given the past record of the United States, its newly discovered concern about chemical weapons rings hollow. For example, during the seven-year-long Iran-Iraq War, the U.S. government conveniently looked the other way when its ally, Iraq, initiated the use of poison gas.

And when the war ended, the U.S. administration had little to say when Iraq used poison gas against its Kurdish minority—killing and maiming thousands.

So far, the "surgical" strike against Libya has not taken place. Perhaps it has just been put on hold. In any case, Washington's allies were not impressed by its phony crusade. They are well aware that the United States itself is the source of much of the research on deadly chemical and biological weapons.

With over \$300 million a year invested in research, and nine storage or production sites holding thousands of chemical missiles, the U.S. administration came with unclean hands to the international conference on chemical weapons held in Paris last December.

Third World countries say the current American campaign against war by poison means, "Limit chemical warfare capability to Western Europe, the United States, and Israel."

Plagues of the past

Of all the horrors of World War I, the terrors of a gas attack are among the most vivid. Some 125,000 tons of chlorine, phosgene, and mustard gas were dumped in lethal clouds on troops on both sides. These silent killers either seared the lungs or burned blisters onto the skin.

An estimated 1.2 million soldiers were casualties. Over 91,000 died on the battlefield. Most of the rest became lifelong invalids, meeting a lingering death some years later.

Reacting in revulsion against the barbarity of chemical warfare, 29 nations in 1925 signed the Geneva Protocol outlawing the use of poison gas in war. The U.S. Senate did not ratify the treaty till 50 years later—in 1975.

Today, research into biological warfare is advancing to the point where it is almost out of control. Reflecting worldwide concern, *The Christian Science Monitor* published a four-part series (starting Dec. 13, 1988) on this

major scourge facing humanity. This graphically illustrated and well-researched survey starts with some history.

As far back as 1763, a British commander at Fort Pitt, Ohio, used biological warfare when he presented two Indian chiefs with blankets that had been used to wrap smallpox victims. The Indians, who had no natural immunity, died by the hundreds.

Nearly 200 years later, in the 1950s, the Pentagon undertook research to spread diseases by all the means available to modern science. They called upon microbiologists, whose normal concern is with the healing arts, to review the plagues of the past. The military wanted to know how Black Death (bubonic plague) could be inflicted on an enemy without endangering friendly troops.

In the 1950s and '60s, many bacteria were reviewed as possible agents. Anthrax is one of them. This toxin is so deadly that a Scottish island, used by the British in 1940 for anthrax research, became uninhabitable for 40 years. An outbreak of anthrax fever in a Soviet city indicated that the Russians were also playing this deadly game.

Research for "defense?"

The U.S. government claims it is doing this research only to find defenses against Russian weapons. But five storage sites with thousands of chemical shells give the lie to the claim that the research is solely defensive.

The Pentagon's claims that it would never endanger the public through its experiments is also a lie. In 1956, over 6000 sheep were killed in Utah when a nerve gas experiment went out of control.

American citizens themselves were unwitting guinea pigs when supposedly benign organisms were spread in the New York subway and in the San Francisco Bay Area to see how lethal germs would spread.

In 1969, President Nixon declared a unilateral halt to U.S. production—but not research—of germ warfare weapons. In reality, Nixon's gesture was nothing more than a public relations ploy while the United States was bombing Vietnam into the stone age, using poison gas and defoliants against Vietnamese peasants.

At this time, the Senate finally ratified the 50-year-old Geneva Treaty banning storage and use of these weapons.

Then Ronald Reagan took office; biological and chemical warfare got a new go-ahead. There was a lot of opposition, however. Three times, Vice President George Bush had to break a tie vote to push the chemical warfare project through.

Two new developments made death by these silent killers more feasible. One was the development of binary chemical agents. Two chemicals, harmless separately, will turn into a deadly gas when combined. By mechanically mixing the ingredients while the bomb or shell is on its way, the danger of handling deadly poisons is reduced.

The Pentagon plans to produce more than 1

million binary weapons at a total cost of \$3 billion.

Gene splicing

An even more profound threat to humanity comes from research on recombinant DNA, or gene splicing. Scientists can now create biological poisons in the laboratory. They can reproduce rattlesnake venom without going near a rattlesnake. But gene splicing may do more. It can alter the venom sufficiently to foil any antidote that may be produced.

This opens up the most frightening perspectives. What if a new toxin, with no known antidote, escapes from a laboratory? A small quantity of a chemical remains a small quantity. But a single spore of anthrax or another living toxin can multiply many

trillion times in a single day. Less than an ounce of deadly tularemia bacteria produces a cloud 325 feet high, covering 0.62 square miles.

Again, there are calls to put the genie back in the bottle. Last July, 500 biomedical researchers signed a pledge "not to engage knowingly in research and teaching that will further the development of chemical and biological warfare agents."

Is it too late? Chemical weapons have been embraced by some Third World countries, who look on them as the poor person's nuclear bomb. Over 20 Third World countries are now capable of producing biological weapons.

The imperialist countries, meanwhile, see biological warfare as an effective means of controlling "restless natives." People are killed but no property is destroyed.

There is even research on an "ethnic toxin," which would be deadly to only one ethnic group. It would be like spreading sickle cell anemia virus among a mixed crowd, and wiping out only Black people!

A heavy responsibility

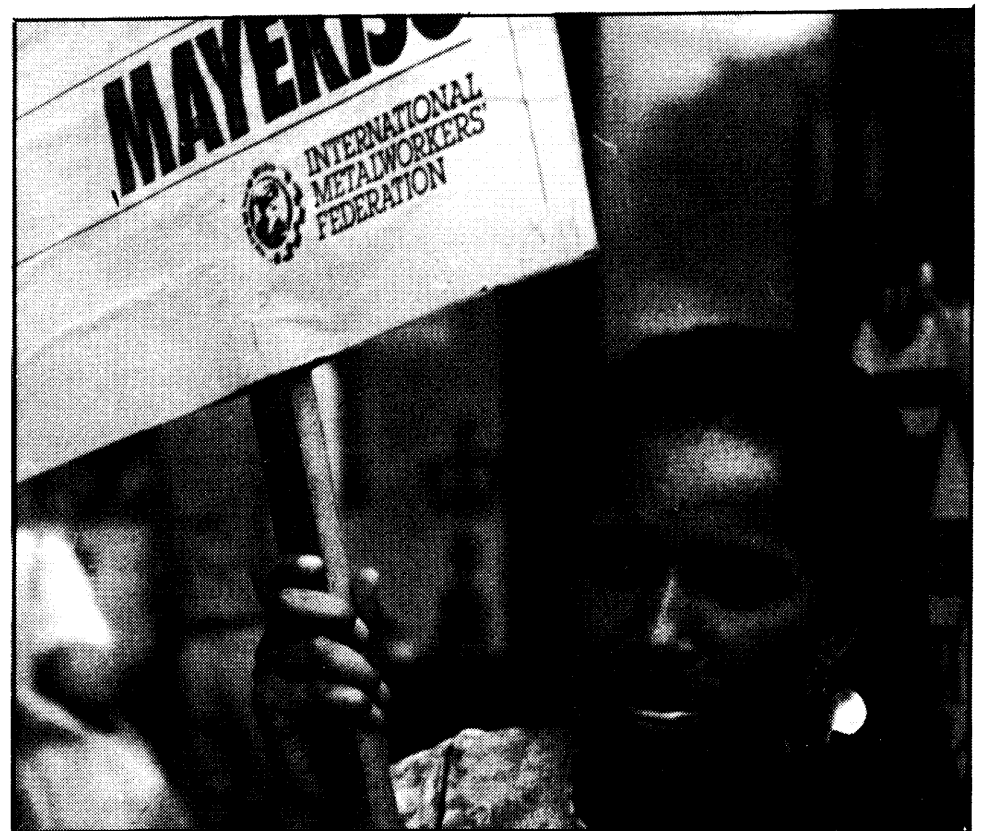
Negotiators have been meeting for 20 years to agree on ways to end this new arms race. It has to be done soon; it's easier to set up a chemical weapons lab than to establish a nuclear arms industry. Pharmaceutical plants can be converted readily to poison arms production, and back again. Chemicals used have many other purposes, and can be bought on all five continents.

The Soviet Union has declared it will no longer produce chemical or biological weapons—and it will destroy all stockpiles. The Soviets have invited visitors to inspect their plants. This is a big step in the right direction, but the United States has not yet reciprocated.

If a new biological arms agreement is worked out, it will probably carry loopholes and escape clauses. We can't depend on government diplomacy to banish the threat of a chemical and biological holocaust. The struggle must be fought by the citizens of every country that introduces this barbarous method of warfare.

This lays a heavy responsibility on the American people, whose government is in the forefront of waging a war by disease and poisonings. We must demand unilateral dismantling of all research and production facilities in this country, and the destruction of every shell, missile, and vial of toxin. The genie must be put back in the bottle. ■

Mayekiso trial resumes



Tina Beacock/Socialist Action

The international defense campaign to free South African metalworkers union leader Moses Mayekiso has won a partial victory. On Dec. 19, after two years in jail on charges of treason, Mayekiso and four other prisoners were released on bail.

The defendants—including Mayekiso's younger brother Mzwanele, Paul Tshabalala, Richard Mdakane, and Obed Bapela—are all residents of Alexandra, a Black township near Johannesburg. Their case centers on allegations that they tried to usurp the authority of the state by establishing "organs of people's

power" in Alexandra in 1986.

When the trial was adjourned on Nov. 30, 1988, Mayekiso and his codefendants had just finished giving their evidence. Defense arguments were set to begin when the case resumed last month.

In the meantime, harsh restrictions remain on the defendants' freedom. They are prohibited from entering Alexandra township. Instead, they must reside in the township of Hillbrow and report to a local police station daily. In addition, they must not attend any gathering of more than 10 people or issue any statements to the press. ■

The Uncompromising Revolution, a film by Saul Landau.

Thirty years after Fidel Castro's victorious march into Havana at the beginning of 1959, the Cuban Revolution continues to be a force of attraction. The image of a broad popular struggle waged in the shadow of the United States gave hope to millions, especially in Latin America. In the United States, Cuba is still maligned as the spearhead of Soviet expansionism in Africa and Central America, or a tropical Gulag 90 miles off the coast of Florida.

Saul Landau's movie, *The Uncompromising Revolution*, is an attempt to cut through this ideological falsification. This, of course, is no easy task. And although the result is uneven, the film warrants viewing by supporters of Cuba and those who are curious about the first socialist revolution to take place in the Western hemisphere.

The film reviews the social advances of the revolution: universal access to education and health care, the right to a job, the elimination of hunger. This may lead the viewer to the impression that Landau is idealizing the revolution. But these impressive achievements are proof positive that only through the elimination of capitalism could this underdeveloped country exorcise scourges plaguing the rest of Latin America.

Complex and contradictory society

The film tempers these remarkable successes, however, by touching on Cuba's continuing shortcomings, obliquely reviewed through narration and interviews of people ranging from the ordinary person to Fidel Castro himself. If these views only skim the surface, they hint at a complex and contradictory society still unable to shake off its economic dependency as it creates the foundations of a socialist future.

Thus, while the dominance of U.S. imperialism was shed, Cuba has been unable to escape its dependence on the production of sugar as its main export crop.

Hence, as the price of this commodity plunged, Cuba has depended on subsidies from the Soviet Union estimated at \$14 million per day. And recent reports suggest that Moscow is anxious to significantly reduce this drain on its own economy, especially given the possibility of "peaceful coexistence" with Washington.

Landau's film is full of seemingly self-contradictory and ambiguous scenes. The expansion of education for the Cuban people is juxtaposed to an off-handed comment that Cuba's stagnant economy may not in the future be able to absorb the skilled workforce trained by the revolution. The obvious rise in the standard of living of the great majority—symbolized by peasants bringing home their new refrigerator on the back of a horse-drawn cart—is contrasted to a middle-aged street-sweeper apparently unable to enjoy the new consumerism.

While interviewees claim that racism and sexism have disappeared, a Black Cuban is shown bemoaning the lack of democracy. Of course the very fact that this opinion could be expressed belies the U.S. media depiction of Cuba as a police state.

A nuclear power plant is shown under construction—Fidel explaining that the country needs electricity yet lacks either hydraulic or coal resources—with one worker suggesting that Chernobyl could be avoided "with the help of our Soviet comrades."

Cuban internationalism

The title of the movie alludes in part to the Cuban Revolution's role internationally, which continues to distinguish it from the Soviet Union, China, and the Eastern Bloc.

Film documentary portrays 30 years of Cuban Revolution



Cuban Premier Fidel Castro with Saul Landau during filming of *The Uncompromising Revolution*.

The film surveys the socialist transformation of the revolution in response to U.S. attempts to reassert its economic and political hegemony. Similarities are noted between the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 and the contra war in Nicaragua.

Cuba's internationalism is highlighted. While enduring a U.S.-imposed trade embargo and the threat of a U.S. invasion, Cuba's international policies have been much more radical than the policies of the Soviet Union or China.

In the 1960s, Cuba supported guerrilla movements throughout Latin America, understanding that the defense of its own revolution was tied to its extension throughout the continent. During the Vietnam War, the Cubans called for "two, three, many Vietnams" to insure the victory of the Vietnamese Revolution. In the 1970s, this spirit led to its intervention in Angola against a South African invasion.

The Cubans took the initiative again in late 1987, stepping up their defense of Angola by launching a counteroffensive against the invading South Africans—even as Mikhail Gorbachev sat down to discuss arms reductions with Ronald Reagan. Cuba's solidarity showed that the spirit of the Cuban Revolution had not been subordinated to "peaceful coexistence."

But Cuba's internationalism has been mixed and uneven. If on the one hand it is uncompromising in the fight against U.S. or South African encroachments, it has downplayed the betrayals of capitalist governments with which it has friendly relations.

Some examples include uncritical support

to the Salvador Allende and Juan Velasco Alvarado regimes in Chile and Peru, respectively, in the 1970s; and political support for Panama's Gen. Manuel Noriega and Mexico's fraudulently elected President Carlos Salinas de Gortari. These important contradictions are not covered in the film.

The "Rectification Campaign"

The film's title also alludes to Cuba's current campaign to "rectify errors" and parenthetically, to reject *Perestroika*.

The film only lightly touches on this "Rectification Campaign" and the underlying economic malaise which sparked it. The campaign began in 1986, originally in reaction to a layer of farmers and middlemen who were striking it rich supplying the non-state-controlled agricultural markets. But the campaign soon burgeoned into a larger affair, aimed at bureaucracy, declining production, and "indiscipline" on all levels.

Interviewees gave Landau examples of the problem. Stories of broken pipes and oil spills caused by bureaucratic indifference are interspersed with accounts of sales clerks who could care less about their customers, or workers who don't work.

The "Rectification Campaign" is an attempt to conquer these problems through appeals to emulate socialist ideals. In many ways it resembles the voluntarism of the 1960s, which ended with the failure to achieve the 10-million-ton sugar harvest (zafra) of 1970.

The problem facing Cuba, however, is the same for other workers' states: The limits of the bureaucratically controlled economy, which stresses quotas rather than quality, have been reached.

And while the right to a job was one of the principal conquests of the socialist revolution, "indiscipline" or a careless attitude toward work is one of the means a worker can express his/her lack of control over the system. While socialists welcome Fidel's attacks on bureaucratic privilege, his appeal to socialist principles, without conceding to the workers and farmers a hand in the management of production, can go only so far.

No workers' democracy

Cuba—to its credit—is currently swimming against the tide within the "socialist camp." The Soviet Union, China, Eastern Europe, and Vietnam have opted for the Pandora's box of "market socialism." Cuba, the uncompromising revolution, has rejected this road, though without pointing to the only viable alternative—workers' democracy.

Unfortunately, Landau's film fails to explain the underlying contradictions of all of the post-capitalist economies, including Cuba's. But in his own way, he senses that the key to Cuba's dilemma is the lack of workers' democracy.

In an article published in the Oct. 24, 1988, issue of *The Nation*, George Black facetiously noted that Fidel was Cuba's greatest, and only, internal critic. The film follows Castro tirelessly touring the country, hearing the problems of the people, and attempting to personally right wrongs. But one person, even one as gifted as Fidel, can only do so much.

The current "Rectification Campaign" is not the first time that Castro has tried to attack bureaucratic privileges and deformities. In 1974, Cuba adopted a system of People's Power, intending to dilute the concentration of power which had passed into the hands of a bureaucratic layer.


Yet grassroots influence was only felt at the lowest levels. Moreover, the Communist Party's political monopoly—which forbids the organization of political tendencies and factions—seriously hampered the ability of the people to critically approach the problems facing their society.

This shortcoming has been replicated in the factories, where planning and management methods were learned in the Eastern Bloc. As a result, the worker-consumers have extreme difficulty having their desires fulfilled by the plan.

Fidel's enormous influence, his critical but uncompromising defense of the existing system, and his ubiquitous presence throughout the country have also hindered the political development of the country. After all, what happens after Fidel? Landau at one point asks Fidel what would happen when he retired. His reply: "That's the subject of the next movie."

The Cuban Revolution has been a source of inspiration for 30 years. It remains the most positive example of post-capitalist society today. Yet the revolution remains plagued by the absence of true institutions of workers' democracy. Ultimately, this is the source of the stagnation plaguing all the workers' states.

Landau's film only hints at this problem. Perhaps too many subjects were attempted to be covered. Nevertheless, the film is a good introduction to the Cuban Revolution—a revolution that has inspired millions of toilers around the world. *The Uncompromising Revolution* can only whet the appetite of the serious student of socialism.



International Viewpoint

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Imprisoned Armenian leader sends open letter to Gorbachev

On Jan. 9, Raphael Khazaryan, a renowned scientist and leader of the Karabakh Committee in Armenia, was arrested in the capital city of Yerevan together with other Armenian nationalists. A week later he was moved to Moscow, where he is currently detained at the Boutirki Prison.

The Karabakh Committee is the recognized leadership of the mass movement for Armenian national rights. It has been fighting to have Nagorno-Karabakh, an oppressed Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan, returned to the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. [See February Socialist Action for more on the Karabakh Committee.]

On Jan. 17-18, elections for candidates to the Supreme Soviet were held at the Physics Institute of the Academy of Sciences in Yerevan. The participants rejected the official candidate nominated by the director of the institute and instead proposed Khazaryan, the prisoner. Whether he will be listed on the final ballot is unlikely.

On Dec. 10, 1988, following the arrest of five other Karabakh Committee members,

...Gorbachev's democracy

(continued from page 1)

had originally nominated 31,500 candidates. But as it turned out, their work was for naught.

The selection of an even 100 candidates, moreover, doesn't leave much work for the voters. So much for the much-heralded campaign against unanimity.

The pyramid structure of the process, glaringly revealed in the Communist Party's reduction of 31,500 nominations to 100, insures top-heavy control.

Democracy from above

At most, a few official organizations managed only slight modification of this caricature.

The Communist Party youth organization, Komsomol, nominated 102 candidates for its 75 seats. But even here, one of the nominees conceded that there was little real involvement or interest on the part of 36 million rank-and-file members. (*New York Times*, Jan. 21, 1989)

In another case, the top board of the Academy of Science refused to approve the nomination of a popular dissident candidate even though he was overwhelmingly recommended by nearly 60 research institutes.

Some of these episodes have become an embarrassment for the regime.

In fact, despite all the previous hoopla surrounding *glasnost*, there has been remarkably little coverage of the elections in the Soviet press. Reporter Len Karpinsky complained in *Moscow News* that he could not cover the election campaign in the official journalists' union "for the simple reason that the press was not admitted there."

Other alternatives

Nominating sessions for the remaining two-thirds (or 1500) of the Congress deputies occurs in legislative districts spread throughout the country. These appear to be less controlled than meetings of the official groups.

Some people who were excluded or ignored by the official groups, for example, have been nominated at the district level. This prospect aroused significant interest.

Several meeting halls were reported to be filled to capacity. Moscow's at-large session drew 900 people with another 2500 pressing against the door.

While all unofficial organizations, and especially oppositionist political clubs, were prohibited from nominating candidates in their own name, dissidents often spoke and distributed their political platforms at the local district level.

One meeting ended with participants marching down the street with their political banners in the air. Mass enthusiasm for open political discussion is tangible despite the many roadblocks that stand in the way.

For example, unlike the candidates of the

Khazaryan wrote an "Open Letter to Mikhail Gorbachev" expressing his views on Gorbachev's perestroika reforms. The following are brief excerpts from this letter.

"Bitterness, disillusionment, and the crumbling of our last hopes in the possibility of justice—such were the reactions of the Armenian people after the interview you gave the press before leaving Armenian territory. ... [Gorbachev had lambasted the Karabakh Committee as "unscrupulous demagogues" and "parasitical rumormongers."]

"You say that we, the militants in the mass movements, are the obstacle to the development of perestroika. But do you really think you will achieve perestroika and democracy on the basis of your sole

authority—by simply replacing the individual in the post of general secretary while at the same time preserving 90 percent of the old apparatus?"

"There is no cure for the apparatus so long as the entire chain of candidates, raised in the party's incubators and impatient to rise up one more rung, is not shattered. You have legitimized this usurpation of political power by concentrating unlimited powers in your own hands. Now we must bury our hopes in democracy, for democracy is incompatible with absolutism.

"I won't hide from you the fact that I believed in you, as did many others. I hoped that I would spend the rest of my life in a society free from servitude. I rejoiced in your



official organizations, who immediately began campaigning after their nomination, the nominees of the national and territorial districts must pass yet another hurdle.

Their candidacy must receive final approval at a small district meeting. This offers another opportunity for screening the final March 26 election ballot.

Of course, most Soviet citizens are intensely suspicious of this arrangement—and for good reason. "The attendance at these meetings...is largely in the hands of district election commissions that have been set up in almost complete secrecy." (*New York Times*, Jan. 23, 1989)

Elections—Gorbachev style

The election process now coming to an end caps a four-year campaign to revamp the antiquated command style of government. In its wake, it has created limited openings for Soviet citizens to speak more freely and organize more openly than at any time in decades.

Not waiting for the sacrosanct formality of official recognition, thousands of political, social, and cultural clubs have recently sprung up all over the Soviet Union. *Pravda* reports that 30,000 of these informal associations exist.

Many of these are dissident working-class and socialist groups searching to discover and reclaim the original political and social goals of the 1917 Russian Revolution. The founding principle of the revolutionary state, long ago repudiated by the corrupt Stalinist apparatus, was the achievement of mass participation in all aspects of government.

In their efforts to find their way to genuine

soviet democracy, workers and youth can expect no help from the current resident in the Kremlin. A closer look at today's elections in the Soviet Union makes it clear that the actual intent of the democratic reforms initiated by Gorbachev is more designed to keep the ruling bureaucracy in power, albeit with a cleaner image, than to establish democracy for the majority.

victories against the 'enemies of perestroika.' It is a bitter thing to have to shed my illusions. ...

"Do you want to hear about the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the [Armenian] Republic, where we rejected the candidacies of the gangsters proposed by the Central Committee of the Republic?"

"This rejection of the official candidates took place in spite of an entire operation mobilized from above, beginning with the party apparatus and the state security agencies all the way down to the criminal elements—in spite of the military occupation of the polling sites and the fraud (900 ballots were secretly slipped into the box). Yes, the people for the first time refused to take part in the old, humiliating comedy of 'choosing the best watermelon from a batch of one.' Despite all the intrigue, the official candidates were repudiated. ...

"Despite the slanders, the barbarous repression, and the arrests, the people know how to separate truth from falsehood. They understand the true reasons for the crusade by the corrupt ones to defend their powers and privileges."

Glasnost's price tag

It is precisely because perestroika economic reforms will be so painful for the majority of people that Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev continually stresses the importance of glasnost democratic reforms.

This is why Gorbachev says that "not a single question concerning the state, the economy or the social fabric can be decided if the Soviets are bypassed." He means that perestroika economic austerity measures can only be enforced if they are carried out under the authority of glasnost-reformed soviets—hence the newly refurbished Congress of Soviet Deputies.

According to official Soviet statements, some 3 million industrial workers will be "released" during the current five-year plan while as many as 16 million may be "released" by the year 2000.

The workers are paying the costs of bureaucratic inefficiency, especially after all industrial concerns switched over to complete cost-accounting and self-financing in January.

Leonid Abalkin, director of the Academy of Science's Institute of Economics and a close Gorbachev associate, admits that the past two years of perestroika produced lower national income growth and a worsened consumer-goods sector than during the Brezhnev years.

Gorbachev's agricultural reforms are no less harmful to the average Soviet citizen. All the fanfare about allowing growers to realize profits from their crops is actually compensation for the anticipated cutoff of government price-support subsidies. Last year, over \$183 billion was paid to reimburse producers for keeping their food prices down.

This tremendous benefit for consumers is a direct result of the 1917 social revolution, which prioritized human needs. But if this subsidy ends, as Gorbachev strongly urges, growers will have no alternative but to pass the costs of food production onto consumers.

Gorbachev's glasnost carries a higher price tag than many Soviet citizens are willing to pay. They may insist on getting more for their money—in which case the democratic openings that have appeared will be put to good use. C.F.

Socialist delegation to tour Soviet Union

Walnut Publishing Co., in conjunction with Socialist Action, is sponsoring a 10-day tour to the Soviet Union by a delegation of American socialists.

The delegation will discuss the political and economic changes in that country with leading dissidents, anti-Stalinist historians, victims of Stalin's purges, and many others.

Delegation participants are Susan Weissman, noted Sovietologist and radio host of KPFK (Los Angeles) "Portraits of the U.S.S.R."; Paul Siegel, co-chair of the U.S. Moscow Trials Campaign Committee and author of several books including "The Meek and the Militant: Religion and Power Across the World"; Carl Finamore, a member of the National Committee of Socialist Action and staff director for the San Francisco Bay Area Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice; and Ralph Schoenman, past Executive Director of

the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and author of numerous books including "The Hidden History of Zionism."

The delegation will also present a letter to the Soviet government on behalf of Esteban Volkov, Leon Trotsky's grandson, and his daughters.

Future issues of *Socialist Action* will report on the results of this important tour.

A 12-city national speaking tour is also planned for the fall. U.S. tour speakers will also include Pierre Broué, director of the Leon Trotsky Institute in France, and Esteban Volkov, Leon Trotsky's grandson.

Tour organizers estimate that the total cost of the Soviet trip and U.S. tour will be over \$30,000. Funds are urgently needed to meet the tour's objectives. Please send contributions—large or small—to help defray costs. Make checks payable to Walnut Publishing Co. and send to 3435 Army St., Rm. 308, San Francisco, CA 94110.

John Tower drops a bomb

Charges are flying about Defense Secretary-nominee John Tower's drinking, womanizing, and financial improprieties. But what about his political views? While serving in the Senate, for example, Tower advocated a military occupation of Cuba and regretted that the United States hadn't dropped a nuclear bomb on the Soviet Union in the 1940s.

During his stopover in Beijing, George Bush lavished compliments on the Chinese leadership. And at night, he and Barbara were made to feel right at home in a State Guest House. At a usual rent of \$20,000 a night, however, it would take a young Chinese worker about 75 years to earn enough to stay at the Guest House.

How much will it cost the government to bail out the savings-and-loan industry? Not long ago,



President Bush said \$90 billion. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady now estimates \$114 billion—plus \$43 billion in interest. And House Banking Committee Chairman Henry Gonzalez pegs it at \$335 billion over 30 years. Hey, what's a few billion shared among friends? The FBI spied on an 11-year-old boy for six years because he

once wrote to the Soviet Union asking for scientific information for a school project.

Men's rights are defended at San Francisco State University. A new "men's rights group" is forming to defend male students from "anti-male bashing on campus." One statistic cited to illustrate men's oppression is that men die eight years before women on average. (It's hard to argue with facts like that.)

About 1700 homeless people live in the subways, says the New York City Transit Authority. Some people even keep mattresses, tables, working stereos, and kitchen supplies. "I like this tunnel," one man said. "It's pretty warm and everyone watches out for everyone down here. It's like a little community."

Soviet authorities have insisted for many years that poverty doesn't exist in the U.S.S.R. Now they admit that about 20 percent of the population lives below the poverty line (earning under \$124 a month). Soviet officials refer to these people as living in a state of "under-provisioning." Regardless of the euphemism, they are poor.

Gorbachev's anti-drinking campaign is on the rocks. Controls on the sale of vodka and cognac have been lifted in Armenia—ever since the nationalist uprising began there. Gorby might have learned a thing or two about putting down rebellions from the South African government; alcohol is always available and cheap in the Black townships.

Korea has the highest industrial accident rate in the world. Over 1700 workers died in mishaps on the job in 1987, while 25,244 were maimed. The accident rate continues to climb as industry gets more sophisticated—while managers continue to exploit in the old fashioned way.

García Gómez still missing, Mexican govt. stalls inquiry

José Ramón García Gómez, a leader of the Mexican Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) is still missing. He was kidnapped outside his home in the town of Cuautla, Morelos, on Dec. 16. Despite a massive international campaign to secure his "reappearance," the Mexican government continues to deny knowledge of his whereabouts.

García Gómez's wife, Ana Santander, writes in a letter dated Feb. 13 that the government commission constituted to find an "immediate solution" to his case has deliberately refused to fulfill its functions. She writes:

"The Minister of the Interior has refused to investigate the origins and owners of the white Fairmont and Volkswagen automobiles, which had no plates, or the identities of the security agents stationed in these cars.

[Note: Before he was kidnapped, these cars had been stationed in front on García Gómez's house the entire day. Neighbors testified that two security agents knocked on their homes to ask questions about García Gómez's political views and daily habits.]

"We made photos available to the police, taken by neighbors, of the state security agents parked in front of our house. The police refuse to enlarge these photos and to compare them with the archive files of all the state security officers....

"The Minister of the Interior refuses to investigate the identity of the security agent who questioned PRT member Francisco Zagal, intimidating him and seeking to make him confess that he, Zagal, had kidnapped García Gómez. This agent said that if he didn't confess, he would do to him what he had done to García Gómez....

"This is why I am determined to continue the struggle for the 'reappearance' of my husband. I'd like to call on all political, trade-union, and democratic-rights organizations in Mexico and throughout the world to join me in this fight and to support the "International Forum For Life and Against Repression," which will be held in Cuautla, Morelos, on Feb. 25-26.

"I'd also like to thank everyone who, for the past 58 days, has solidarized with the



On Feb. 22, a San Francisco delegation met with a Mexican consulate official (back to camera) to protest the José Ramón García Gómez kidnapping. Photo (L. to R.) Carl Finamore, staff director, Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice; Fr. Peter J. Sammon, member, S.F. Human Rights Commission; Robert Hernandez, co-chair, S.F. Rainbow Coalition; Rick Ruvolo; (face hidden) administrative aide to the President of the S.F. Board of Supervisors; and Brian McWilliams, secretary-treasurer, ILWU ship clerks, Local 34. Not shown in photo: Elizabeth Price, business manager, *The Tenderloin Times*, and Jeff Mackler, co-national secretary, Socialist Action.

campaign to free my husband. I am convinced this campaign will continue to grow until we win his 'reappearance.'"

The International Forum that Ana Santander refers to was endorsed by the PRT, the Revolutionary Democratic Party (formed recently by Cuauhtemoc Cardenas), dozens of neighborhood organizations, as well as the mayors and city council members of various towns and villages in the state of Morelos.

The next issue of *Socialist Action* will report on this important meeting.

We urge our readers who haven't yet done so to send telegrams demanding García Gómez's "reappearance" to: Fernando Gutierrez Barrios, Minister of the Interior, Bucareli 99, Mexico, D.F., Mexico. Please send copies to the National Front Against Repression, Medellin 366, Col. Roma Sur, 06760 Mexico, D.F., Mexico.

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Worldwide defense effort sets Hugo Blanco free

As we go to press, news has come of an important victory in Peru. On Feb. 24, Hugo Blanco, a revolutionary socialist and Peru's most prominent peasant leader, was released after his kidnapping and arrest by government authorities.

On Feb. 9, Blanco was abducted along with Luis Tuesta de la Torre, the general secretary of the Peruvian Peasant Federation in the department of Ucayali. In a related victory, Tuesta was released on Feb. 11.

Later, the Peruvian Ministry of the Interior admitted that Blanco was being held in the barracks in the town of Pucallpa. Charges of inciting armed rebellion and carrying arms were made against Blanco.

An international campaign was organized for Blanco's release. Delegations were formed to visit Peruvian embassies in Europe and Latin America. In this country, several prominent individuals sent protest letters and telegrams to the Peruvian government.

A letter signed by Kurt Vonnegut, I.F. Stone, Linus Pauling, and Ralph Shoenman pointed out: "The arbitrary imprisonment of Hugo Blanco, a life-long peasant leader, on charges of insurrection has taken place

immediately following the murder of several peasant leaders and the assassination of the president of the mineworkers of Peru, who had led a protracted strike."

The peasants of Pucallpa have been on strike since Jan. 25, demanding better prices for their farm produce as well as bank loans at affordable rates. The police attacked the strikers several times, killing at least 28 people. The army is responsible for the "disappearance" of many other peasants in the region; bodies have turned up in clandestine mass graves.

During the week of Feb. 5, over 300 peasants were arrested after a series of mass demonstrations protesting the government's inability to carry out significant land reform.

The protests were led by the Peruvian Peasant Federation, an organization allied with the Unified Mariateguista Party (PUM). Hugo Blanco is the organizational secretary of the federation and a member of the central committee of the PUM.

The fact that Hugo Blanco's life was saved highlights the importance of a rapid and broad-based international defense campaign.

Comrades and friends remember Milt Alvin

Fourth International

The following message was sent to the memorial meetings for Milt Alvin in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

The Fourth International salutes and pays tribute to the life of Comrade Milt Alvin, a founding member of the Fourth International, a life-long revolutionary socialist. Comrades such as Milt helped to keep the revolutionary concepts of socialism alive for the future generations.

He is now gone, but his life's achievements will be remembered and his vision of a socialist world will endure.

Long live his memory. Long live the Fourth International.—Livio Maitan, for the United Secretariat of the Fourth International

He took the long view of history

Following are major excerpts from a message sent to the memorial meetings for Milt Alvin.

The Fourth International Tendency and *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, like Socialist Action, are dedicated to the Trotskyist Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, and to the struggle for the working-class party in this country based on that program.

Our antecedents are in the history of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Therefore, it is appropriate for us to pay tribute to the memory of Milton Genecin [Milton Alvin], an influential leader in the SWP in the post-World War II years until his expulsion for Trotskyism in 1983.

Students of the history of American Trotskyism will benefit from reading articles by Milt Alvin in *The Militant*, *Fourth International*, *International Socialist Review*, and *Intercontinental Press*—all SWP publications at different times over the past 40 years.

Also, articles by the same writer appeared in *Socialist Action* and most recently in *Cahiers Leon Trotsky*, September 1988, published in Grenoble, France.

Alvin also contributed regularly to the SWP internal discussion bulletins through the years. His contributions to the internal life of the SWP are a record of the tasks and perspectives of the party at every juncture of its post-war history.

He was prominent in the national committee, always present at its plenums and national conventions, where he invariably assumed responsibility on sub-committees and organizational tasks at most gatherings.

His political contributions were equally consistent. He always came prepared with careful reports and observations on party activity, and the changing political scene. Never shy in advancing his own opinions about what needed to be done, Milton counted himself among those who took "the long view of history."

He was never demoralized by an unfavorable turn in the class struggle nor discouraged by some temporary setbacks in SWP activity in the electoral arena or union field. He was profoundly convinced that the party, with its program for restructuring society, would surmount all obstacles.



Tybie Marton, long-time companion of Milt Alvin, speaking in Los Angeles at a Feb. 19 meeting to celebrate his contributions to the revolutionary movement. In San Francisco, a memorial meeting was held on Feb. 4.

By CAROLE SELIGMAN

Milt Genecin, known in the socialist movement as Milt Alvin, died in Los Angeles on Jan. 26 after surgery for a broken hip. His health had been failing in recent years. Milt would have been 81 years old on March 3.

Milt was born in 1908 in Sebastopol, a Black Sea port in Czarist Russia, to an upper-class Jewish family. They came to the United States because the quota for Jews in good schools was filled.

After Milt graduated from high school, he went to work on Wall Street, and there he made money as a stock broker. But the 1929 crash—when Milt was just 21—made him question the American economic "facts of life." In his search for answers, he went to the

public library and discovered Marxist writings there.

When Milt began to espouse some of the ideas he had been reading, a friend called him a "Trotskyist." Thereupon, Milt decided to find out exactly what a Trotskyist was. He soon met some of the followers of Leon Trotsky, whose group in the United States was called the Workers Party.

At that moment, the Trotskyists were about to enter the Socialist Party (SP). A large and youthful left wing had been growing inside the SP, providing a fertile field for a revolutionary program to take root. Milt joined the SP with the Trotskyists.

A couple of years later, the Trotskyists were bureaucratically expelled from the Socialist Party, but they took a majority of the SP youth with them. In 1938, Milt became a

founder of the new Trotskyist organization, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

Milt was drafted into the army during World War II. After the war, a large wave of militancy came about in the labor movement. Milt was a member of the New York City SWP branch at the time, but soon went to Toledo, Ohio, to build the branch there. He became the branch organizer, an educator, and a builder of the party's national auto fraction.

Milt moved to Los Angeles during the 1950s. He was able to make a significant financial contribution to the party and carries a lot of the credit for keeping the party afloat during the witchhunt McCarthyite years.

He also served on the national committee of the SWP and was a frequent contributor to the party's public journals and its internal discussion bulletins. Even after the debilitating disease of emphysema took his health and physical strength, he continued to contribute as a writer and a teacher.

Milt was undemocratically expelled from the Socialist Workers Party in 1983, when the present leadership purged the Trotskyists from the organization. Later that year, he was a founder of Socialist Action. Despite his illness, he took an active part in national gatherings of Socialist Action and played an important role in building our Los Angeles branch.

Milt Alvin remained true to the cause of socialism even when he knew that he would not see the revolution in his own lifetime. And yet he must have felt that—insofar as he helped to sustain and educate the next generation of revolutionary fighters—he carried part of the fate of humanity on his shoulders. ■

John Anderson 1907-1989

By HENRY AUSTIN

Socialist veteran John Anderson, 82, died in Detroit on Feb. 17 after a long bout with heart disease. He was active in working-class struggles throughout his life.

Anderson was raised in Wisconsin under the extremely strict Calvinist discipline of his father, who was a lumberjack. As a young man living through the Depression years, he rebelled and joined the revolutionary anarchist Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) or Wobblies.

He became a marvelous soap-boxer who could speak extemporaneously on any issue of concern to the working class. This is where he got his political experience.

In 1933, Anderson, then working as a Detroit sheetmetal worker, was involved in the Briggs Manufacturing Company strike. Later he participated in the great sit-down strikes in Detroit and Flint which formed the United Autoworkers of America (UAW).

He joined the Socialist Party (SP) during this time. When the Trotskyists in the left-wing of the SP were expelled, Anderson joined with them to form the Socialist Workers Party. He left the SWP in 1953 because of political differences.

Anderson spent his whole life in the trade-union and socialist movements as an activist

and writer. He wrote extensively about the rise and decline of the UAW, including an unpublished biography of prominent UAW leader Walter Reuther. In the mid-1950s witchhunt period, it was Reuther who had Anderson bureaucratically removed as president of the large Fleetwood UAW local.

During the Vietnam War, Anderson led organizing efforts that succeeded in making Dearborn, Mich., the first American city to pass a referendum demanding: U.S. Out of Vietnam.

He has written a pamphlet, "The First 50 Years of the UAW," and he wrote a regular labor column for the newspaper of the International Socialist Organization—of which he was a member at the time of his death.

Anderson was married for 53 years. His wife, Dominica (or Minnie, as she is known) was raised in an Italian anarchist family. In her youth, she was a member of the Detroit-based Proletarian Party. Other surviving members of the family are a daughter Maria and grandsons Steven and Walter Williams.

John Anderson is a courageous figure in the memory of older workers. He waged a militant fight for socialism in the working class of America for over 50 years. His life is an honorable example for the next generation.

Join Socialist Action!

The socialist movement stands on the shoulders of our veterans—those who fought the cops and company goons to build unions in this country; those who stood fast against the McCarthy witchhunt; those who marched against racism, North and South; those who welcomed the Cuban Revolution; and those who rejoiced as the anti-Vietnam War protests signaled the awakening of a rebellious youth movement.

Our heroes were forged in these struggles. They have paved an honorable path for the present generation to follow.

Capitalism attracts the Oliver Norths, Lee Iaccocas, and Ivan Boesky's who are valued because they have climbed over and above others. We ask nothing more than what you are able to contribute. We ask nothing less than a commitment to justice and equality—the example we have inherited.

Soviet workers: A giant just beginning to awake

By PAUL SIEGEL

Martin Walker, *The Waking Giant: Gorbachev's Russia*. New York, Pantheon Books, 1988. 315 pp. \$8.95.

Martin Walker was the resident correspondent in the Soviet Union of the British liberal newspaper *The Guardian*. His book was conceived and begun with its present title when Chernenko was still in power. The "Waking Giant" referred at that time not to the effect of the

BOOK REVIEW

measures taken by the Gorbachev government but to the sense of the need for change he found among the Soviet intelligentsia.

"The Waking Giant" was first published in 1986. The present edition seeks to bring the book up to date with a postscript written in November 1987. Of necessity, it lags behind events and contains a good deal that is now well known. However, some of the analysis and many of its facts are still useful.

Walker is able to see both the achievements made possible by the nationalization of the means of production and the increasingly choking effect of the bureaucracy's grip on the system.

"The Soviet Union," he says, "has built the world's second largest economy, and over the post-war period has grown faster than its main rival, the USA. Its industrial output has grown more than twice as fast, its agricultural output about 80 percent faster, and its industrial productivity, which was running at 30 percent of the American rate in 1950, is now at almost 60 percent of that rate."

However, "over the past 15 years, the Soviet economy has been running faster and faster to stay in the same place, investing more and more to keep growing less quickly.

"During the 1970s, the Soviet national income grew by 62 percent—though surpassing the record of the USA or the EEC [European Economic Community] countries, this



was the worst decade performance for the Soviet Union since the war years, and each extra 1 percent of growth required an increase of 1.4 percent in investment and 1.2 percent in raw materials."

Regime of internal control

Walker explains how in the centralized command system

the top planners operate in ignorance, misled by a self-serving lower bureaucracy concerned only with the bonuses it gets for meeting the plan. The result is the goods of poor quality and the shortages characteristic of the system.

This bureaucracy does not have the creativity of thought that is more than ever needed in an economy of the Soviet Union's present size and complexity. The problem is aggravated by the difficulties the Soviet Union is having in the development of high-tech industry.

"An almost paranoid obsession with security puts hermetic seals between whole sectors of research. Photocopying machines are still rare in the Soviet Union, because of fears that they could be used to reproduce 'subversive' literature. ... Printers for microcomputers are simply unobtainable. ... To modernize, the Soviet Union must change its regime of internal control."

The working class

The greatest shortcoming of Walker's book is its lack of discussion of the Soviet working class.

The development of industry and the extension of education (young people in the Soviet Union, says Walker, have almost twice the chance of receiving a university education than they have in the United Kingdom or in West Germany) have produced not only a new intelligentsia but a new working class. This working class is a far cry from the recently transplanted peasants of Stalin's day.

Insofar as Walker mentions the working class at all, he tends to regard it as an obstacle to technocratic reform. "Improving the efficiency of Soviet factories meant getting rid of surplus labor and firing idle or incompetent workers. In a state where the implicit social contract guarantees a job for every worker, this was dangerous."

He does not envisage an improvement of efficiency that would not take away the remaining social gains of the revolution—the guarantee of employment and the state subsidization of necessities like housing—but would instead operate by democratically centralized planning, with workers' control at the point of production checking on and modifying the plan.

This would differ from bureaucratically centralized planning as day differs from night. Reform from above by a wing of the bureaucracy that realizes the need for modernization must be bureaucratic in nature, incomplete, and concerned with maintaining the bureaucracy even if only in modified form.

It is to the working class that, unlike the dissidents of the 1960s and 1970s, the radicals in the clubs and informal associations of Gorbachev's Soviet Union are directing themselves. It is the working class that is the truly powerful giant that is just beginning to stir in its sleep.

Our readers speak out

Dump busters

Dear editor,

I was born and raised in Wellsville in New York's Allegany County—one of the poorest counties in New York state. The big annual events here are the Allegany County Fair, the Great Wellsville Balloon Rally, and Gabby Hayes Day (an event named after Wellsville's most famous citizen). Otherwise, everything was always fairly quiet—until recently!

During my last visit to Wellsville, I heard that the state of New York was considering Allegany County as a location for a nuclear-waste dump. But on Jan. 26, the state got a big surprise. Over 5000 people, roughly 10 percent of the county's population, turned out to oppose the dump.

Only 1500 people were able to jam into the gym of the local school, where the state's Low-level Waste Siting Commission conducted a public hearing. Others had to use the school garage or stand outside. Chanting of "No Dump" regularly greeted the commission. Some people showed up with posters proclaiming "Dump Busters" or "Hell No, We won't Glow."

The main topic of discussion now in Allegany County is the dump and how to fight it. Bumper stickers, buttons, and T-shirts are being sold to promote even greater opposition. It's obvious that the growing national opposition to the nuclear industry has had a big impact on little Allegany County.

It came as a surprise to me that this kind of response would be boiling underneath the surface of this usually conservative and quiet bit of New York state where I was raised. Then again, it's wise to remember the words of one of the local residents, "We hill-billies aren't to be trifled with!"

Bill O'Kain,
Cincinnati, Ohio

Solidarity

Dear editor,

Enclosed is a copy of a protest letter I have written and sent to the mayor and the district attorney of San Francisco. The letter was written to protest the assistant district attorney's efforts to obtain a list of campaign contributors for Socialist Action candidates Joe Ryan and



This is a page where our readers can speak out. We welcome letters. But please keep them short. When necessary, for reasons of space, they will be abridged.

—The editors

Nazi skins and anti-racist skins. All skinheads are not Nazis, as all Nazis are not skinheads. Many of the most militant members of the Anti-Racism League are anti-racist skins.

Donny Schraffenberger,
Anti-Racism League,
Cincinnati, Ohio

Trotsky

Dear editor,

Mikhail Belyat, a correspondent for the *Moscow News* recently interviewed Esteban Volkov (Leon Trotsky's grandson) in Mexico. In the Feb. 26-March 5 edition, the Soviet correspondent allows Volkov to defend Trotsky's role as a revolutionary Marxist and a fighter against Stalinism.

Belyat writes: "I would not dispute the grandson's opinion about his grandfather. ... Simply I don't have, nor can I have, my own opinion about Trotsky to contrast to Esteban's."

"Like the overwhelming majority of the Soviet people, I haven't read Trotsky's works in order to grasp the substance of his errors, and am not aware of his views on socialism and Marxism. The few denunciations of Trotsky in our history books are about as convincing as the legend about the Immaculate Conception."

Jim Henle,
Boston, Mass.

Morris Starsky, socialist activist, dies

Morris Starsky, a member of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), died of heart disease in Cincinnati on Jan. 20. He was 55 years old.

Starsky was an activist in the Vietnam antiwar struggle in the 1960s while he was employed as an assistant professor of philosophy at Arizona State University. Soon after he joined the SWP in 1970, the Arizona State Board of Regents fired him from his job on political grounds.

A civil liberties defense campaign on his behalf won wide support. In 1972, a court ruled that his dismissal had been unconstitutional and he was reinstated. However, his reinstatement was soon overturned on technical grounds.

Later, the FBI released documents that showed that Starsky had been the target of an FBI operation that sought his dismissal. In 1981, Starsky testified in a court suit brought by the SWP and the Young Socialist Alliance against government spying. The suit ended in victory in 1986.

Starsky moved to Cincinnati 10 years ago and, despite his failing health, remained an active party member to the end.

Sylvia Weinstein.

I am an active supporter of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP); however, I have in the past subscribed to your newspaper, which I have always found to be intelligently written.

It is very important that Marxist-Leninists pull together around defense issues. Whenever the capitalist class attacks the Left, we must unite together.

The future course of the socialist revolution in this country cannot be predicted before it happens; it shall unfold dialectically within the context of the concrete situation at that time. Therefore, no one party or political line can claim to be the one and the only true vanguard of the proletariat.

Let us always remember that which we share in common despite the principled differences that separate the various parties of the Trotskyist movement.

Thank you very much for your solidarity in connection with the struggle to free Mark Curtis, the SWP meatpacker who was framed up in Des Moines.

R. W.,
Berkeley, Calif.

Skinheads

Dear editor,

Your article, "Skinheads: Do shaved skulls reflect new look of fascism?" [January 1989 *Socialist Action*] was very informative but misrepresented the Dec. 3 Anti-

Racism Rally held in Cincinnati. We in the Cincinnati Anti-Racism League welcome anyone who is opposed to racism and is willing to work within the democratic structure of the coalition.

We seriously did try to get representatives from minority organizations, but being a newly formed coalition, some Black and student organizations were hesitant to speak and participate at the rally on Dec. 3. Hopefully, we can rectify this situation in our upcoming activities.

Once again, we invite members of Socialist Action to participate in the Anti-Racism League to help end this cancerous spread of white supremacist ideology.

Also, when using the term skinhead, please differentiate between

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Why thousands will march for women's rights on April 9

By SYLVIA WEINSTEIN and SANDY DOYLE

There is a resurgence in the women's rights movement, especially in the fight to preserve reproductive rights. The call by the National Organization for Women (NOW) for the April 9 national march in Washington, D.C., is an example of the type of response that is needed.

The cutting edge of women's rights today is the right to control their reproductive system. This includes the right to birth control and abortion. Without these rights—and the right to socially provided childcare and child support—equality is just a catch word.

The roots of the women's rights movement of today are in the struggles of the 1950s and '60s, when a large section of the American people became involved in protests against nuclear weapons, for free speech and civil liberties, and in support of the massive drive against segregation in the South.

This was followed by the movement against the war in Vietnam. Many young women were activists in the antiwar movement. They were organizing demonstrations, sit-ins, teach-ins, and whole college campuses against the war. They were learning the skills of mass organization.

Even more important, they witnessed the fact that victories could be won by massive demonstrations in the streets—without relying on the promises of Democratic and Republican party politicians.

At the same time, however, women were able to see that they, as women, had special needs that were not being addressed by anyone on campus, in the civil rights and antiwar movements, or within the trade unions.

Independent women's groups sprung up all over this country. Women's magazines and newsletters were published. On campus, women began to insist on women's studies programs, just as Blacks and Hispanics had been doing. Reproductive rights, especially the right to a legal and safe abortion, were major demands.

Organizing for abortion rights

Until women began to openly speak up about the reality of illegal, and often botched abortions, this horror was not widely known. It was something so secret that no one actually admitted to ever having had one. In response, abortion speak-outs were held where woman after woman would get up and tell her personal experience.

For the first time, women could see that they were not alone and that women all over the country—in fact throughout the world—were beginning to act in similar fashion. "Sisterhood is Powerful!" became an international slogan.

Many gains were made in winning rights for women around the world. In this country, in addition to the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision in 1973 legalizing abortion, women began to be hired in previously all-male jobs. Educational opportunities for women were expanded.

But many of the gains women made during the early 1970s had been eroded by the early '80s. This was a result of the austerity drive which the ruling class has undertaken to protect their profit margin. The victory won on abortion rights in 1973 has been under constant attack ever since.

Divide and rule

The persistent state-by-state legal approach of the anti-abortion groups has already resulted in ending the abortion rights of thousands of women in this country—primarily poor women and teenagers. It is no accident that these women were the initial targets. The divide-and-rule strategy has been effective in attacking those least able to defend themselves.

As early as 1976, with the passage of the Hyde amendment, individual states were allowed to restrict Medicaid funding of abortion except in cases of rape, incest, or

when a woman's life was endangered. In 1981, this funding was eliminated for pregnancies resulting from sexual crimes.

Current law allows abortions with Medicaid funding only if a woman's life is endangered. There have been efforts to extend these restrictions to all military and federal health insurance benefits.

Only 13 states currently provide Medicaid

funding of abortions. Four of these only do so under court order. The Supreme Court has sustained these rules when challenged by pro-choice advocates. Abortion-rights groups estimate that 1.5 million women are currently denied abortion as a result of the restrictions already in effect.

Women without private healthcare are also the biggest targets of newer federal legislation

that restricts family-planning agencies that receive any federal money from even informing women about abortion as an alternative. These new rules are being challenged by Planned Parenthood and others, but implementation is scheduled to begin this year.

Parental-consent laws

Of the 1.5 million abortions that are performed each year in the United States, about one-third are teenage pregnancies. While the Supreme Court had previously struck down laws requiring parental consent, since 1981 they have upheld some of them.

There are now laws on the books in 25 states requiring parental consent—although only 10 states are currently enforcing them. Last year, contradictory judgments were made by federal courts on the constitutionality of these laws, which means they could also be referred to the Supreme Court for review.

In addition to the attacks on poor and young women, there have been a series of challenges trying to assert "fathers rights" to decide on abortion. The Court has overturned these challenges, but the litigations have succeeded in causing delays to women receiving abortions.

The anti-abortion forces have constantly introduced bills in state legislatures and the U.S. Congress seeking to further limit or eliminate abortion rights. Between 1977 and 1986, Congress dealt with 453 abortion bills, amendments, and riders.

Most serious is the recent Supreme Court decision to review a case (Webster v. Reproductive Health Services) involving a Missouri statute which defines life as beginning at conception. The law states that no public funds can be used to perform an abortion or to counsel women about abortion.

The Supreme Court can decide to consider not only the constitutionality of the specific provisions of the Missouri law but to reconsider the Roe v. Wade decision itself. The impetus to reconsider Roe v. Wade came directly from the federal Justice Department. A decision by the court to uphold any portion of the Missouri law would be a serious setback for the women's movement.

Outlawing abortion has never stopped abortions from happening. Making abortions illegal forces women who need them to risk death or maiming by going to illegal practitioners.

Countering Operation Rescue

Along with the legislative and judicial attacks on abortion rights, groups associated with the "right-to-life" movement present another challenge for pro-choice groups.

Randall Terry's Operation Rescue—launched in 1986 and claiming only 6000 members—consider themselves the "Green Berets" of the "pro-life movement." They've been laying siege to clinics around the country following their big effort during the Democratic Party convention, which they referred to as the "Siege of Atlanta."

Operation Rescue uses a method of action that seems to copy the civil-disobedience of the civil rights movement. However, the civil rights movement was fighting to increase the rights of people, whereas these right-wingers are fighting to take away the rights of women.

On Oct. 29, they targeted 32 cities with their methods of praying, singing hymns, and sidewalk counseling—in which they display their pictures of bloody fetuses in order to turn women seeking abortion away from the clinic.

They badger women with the express intention of disrupting and stopping the performance of abortions. When they can, they chain themselves to clinic doors. Their intention, they say, is "to intervene between the killer and the innocent victim at the mills."

Despite all of the publicity given to this new right-wing group, Operation Rescue does

(continued on page 4)



Alexel Folger/Socialist Action

Last November, pro-choice forces in Boston, Mass., mobilized over 2000 supporters to confront Operation Rescue's attempt to close down clinics.

Demonstrate April 2 in S.F. and April 9 in Wash., D.C.

By SANDY DOYLE

Thousands of women and men will demonstrate in Washington, D.C., on Sunday, April 9. The march for Women's Equality/Women's Lives was called by the National Organization for Women (NOW) and endorsed by a wide variety of groups supporting women's rights.

This is a much-needed response to a long series of attacks on women's right to choose abortion and to receive equal treatment under the law.

NOW reported last month that 100 buses had already been reserved for the Washington march from New York City, 50 from the Philadelphia area, 30 from New Jersey chapters, and at least 20 from Boston.

In California, a coalition of pro-choice groups is building a march and rally in San Francisco on Sunday, April 2. The event was called in support of the April 9 action in Washington.

The coalition had originally planned its action to coincide with the Washington march but agreed to hold it one week earlier at the request of organizers of the D.C. event.

A number of people plan to attend both the San Francisco and the Washington, D.C., demonstrations.

The Supreme Court's recent decision to review a Missouri law limiting abortion is an indication of how tenuous the right of women to choose abortion really is—despite the support of the majority of Americans for this right.

A defeat here will affect not only women's rights but all civil rights. The majority who support women's rights must be heard from on April 2 and April 9.

For information about the Washington demonstration, call NOW at (202) 331-0066. In California, for information on the April 2 and the April 9 events, call the April 2 Committee at (415) 255-1989.